

SPORTS REVIEW

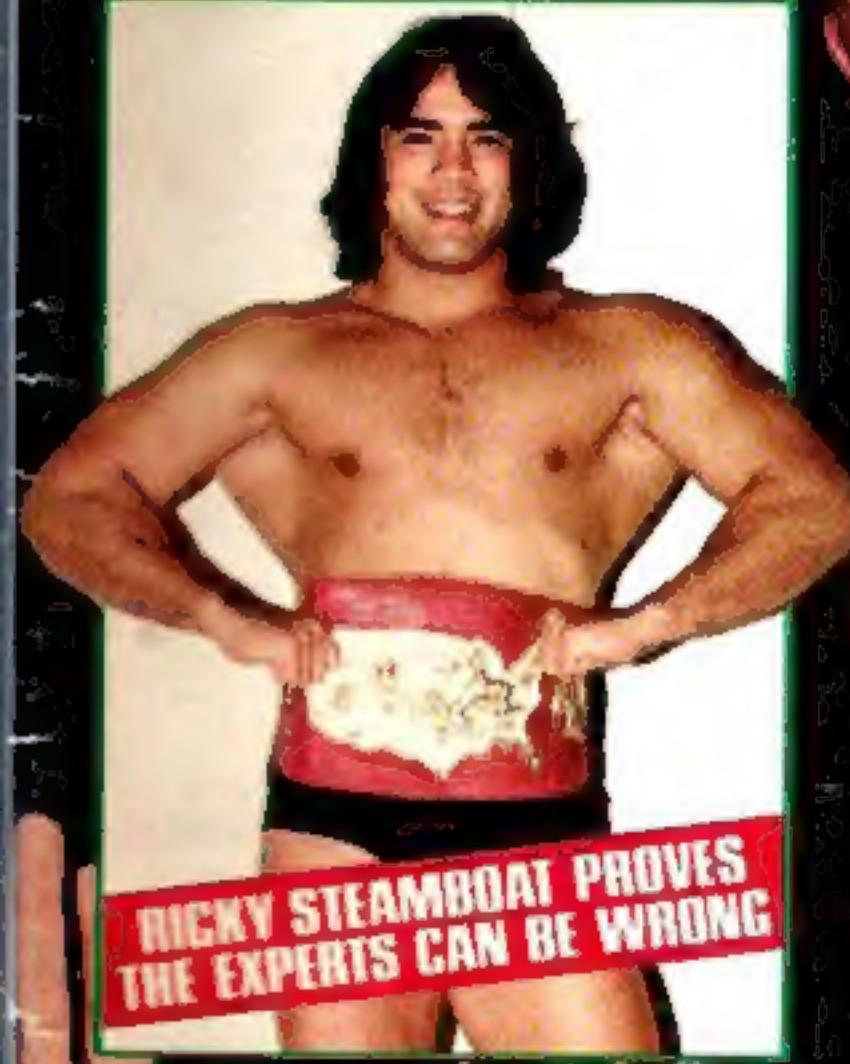
June 1978

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Wrestling

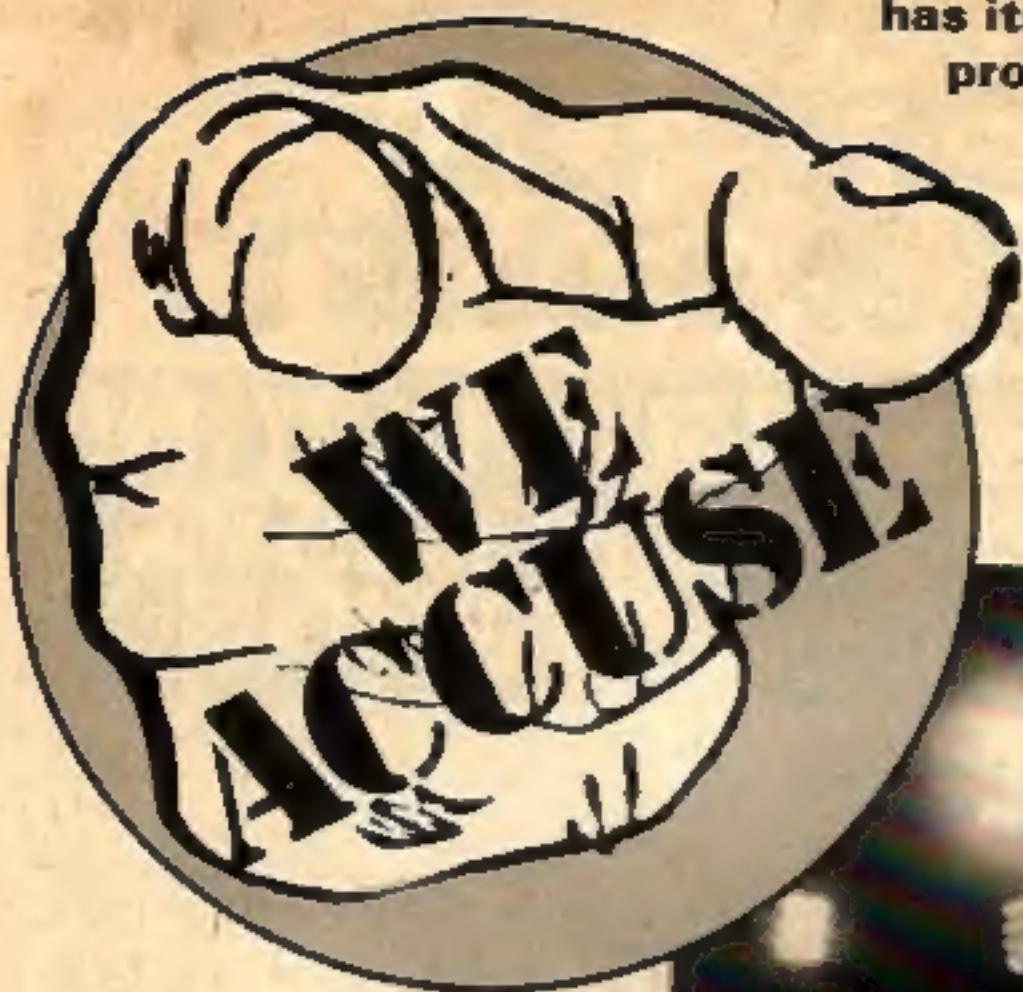
**Bob Backlund vs.
Ken Patera:**

**THE MAKING
OF A CHAMPION!**



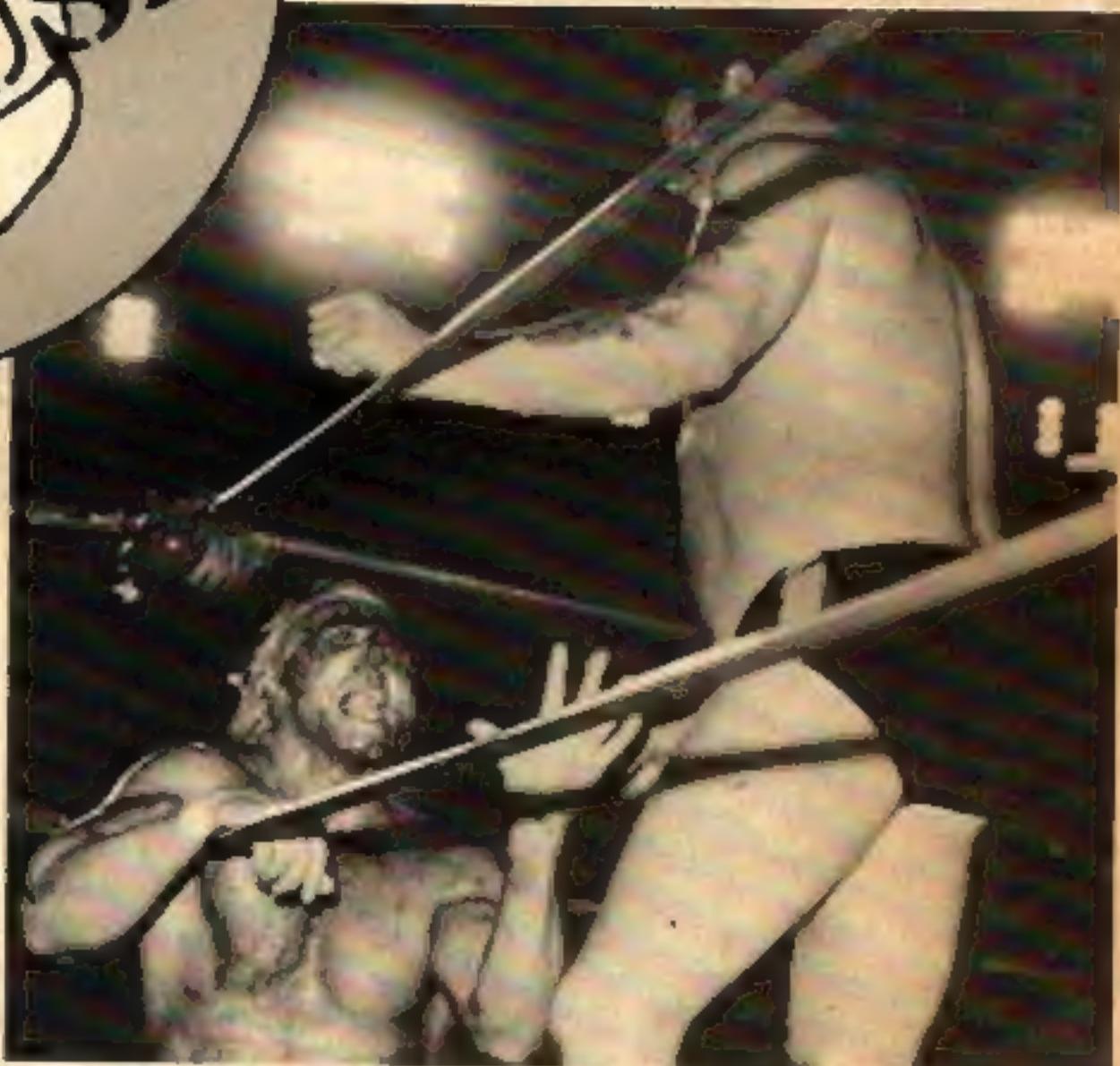
**THE
UNCHAINED FURY
OF AN APARTMENT
WRESTLER**





The sport of wrestling, like any other sport, has its share of problems. Some of these problems are so outrageous they need to be pointed out and corrected as quickly as possible. When "We Accuse" points the finger at a target, fireworks are sure to follow!

BY THE EDITORS



Superstar Graham pleads for mercy from Harley Race during a brief interval in the "Superbowl of Wrestling." It is the opinion of the editors that this type of match—to decide one world champion—is not necessary for the sport.

HERE IS A lot of talk these days about the eventuality of there being one world champion of wrestling. The recent "Superbowl of Wrestling" in Miami was one major step in that direction. There will probably be more. However, we are not sure if it is such a good idea.

Over the years, many people have presented arguments for there being one world champion. These are usually valid statements, ones citing the need to unify the sport, to have one man universally recognized as the greatest wrestler of all. On paper, this all sounds good. But when put into a real situation, some things might begin to fall apart.

The editors of SPORTS REVIEW WRESTLING have logged many thousands of miles on the road, viewing the wrestling in countless cities around the world. We have seen the differences between the NWA, the AWA, and the WWWF. Each association has its own character, some element which sets it apart from the others. Each federation is unique, and

therefore exciting. It would be a shame to lose this.

Of course, people will always wonder who should be considered the best wrestler in the sport. We certainly do. But we also realize that this speculation, in and of itself, should not be the motivating factor for unifying the three major associations (not to mention the countless local promotions involved) into one wrestling federation with one champion. We

would lose so much more than we would gain.

As of this writing, all three major associations are headed by rulebreaking champions. This is, of course, a regrettable thing. But on any given day, this situation could change. There are always new young men coming on the scene, moving up the ranks of the three major federations who will eventually challenge these present

(Continued on page 50)

WRESTLER OF THE MONTH

PETER
MAIVIA



Maivia has Superstar Billy Graham writhing in agony with a skilled armlock during a recent match. If it had not been for Graham's illegal maneuvering, Maivia would have taken the belt from Superstar. Now it is too late.

THE RUGGED BROWN face was disfigured by astonishment and shame, by despair and agony. Injured as much by the vicious blows of Superstar Billy Graham as by his punctured pride, Samoan Peter Maivia contemplated quitting wrestling.

He wished to return to his native land, no longer wanting the abuses, the pain, the disappointments. Yet the fans, swiftly intrigued by this thickly muscled man with artistic tattoos inundating his legs, urged him to return.

It was a difficult decision. But Peter Maivia decided to continue

wrestling, to continue to perfect the promise he had displayed in earlier matches.

Once more it was a match against the despicable Superstar Billy Graham. This time it was a superb display of wrestling brilliance by the skilled Samoan. At times, it appeared he would tear the championship belt from Graham with one of his many devastating holds. It is this combination of persistence and courage which has earned Maivia the prestigious "Wrestler of the Month" award.

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Peter Maivia stands tall and proud in the ring, receiving the cheers of his thousands of admirers.

Every month, the editors of SPORTS REVIEW WRESTLING search the globe to find the one man whose achievements have surpassed those of all other wrestlers. Sometimes the selection may shock you. Other times you will be very pleased by the selection. But you will always agree our choice deserves to be "Wrestler of the Month!"

THE TATTER

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Virginia W. Sloan
Amarillo, Tex.
Randy Swift
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Barry Simon
Tampa, Fla.



GREG GAGNE
& **JIM BRUNZELL**

DENVER, COLO.—All right, everyone knows Greg Gagne and Jim Brunzell are unbeatable as a tag team. But that in no way implies they are perfect. Far from it!

No one is quite sure how it started (though some people know what it was about), but there was definitely a furious argument between the two partners before a recent match here. Everything seemed calm when it was time for Jim and Greg to go into the arena. But according to my sources here, there was one hell of a fight going on in the dressing room.

(Continued on page 12)

Never before in this history of wrestling journalism have so many respected reporters been involved in so important a venture. The best wrestling correspondents from all over the country have been enlisted to report on the news behind the news. Every wrestling fan must consider this the most important column he can read!

THE TATTLER

(Continued from Page 10)

I will not make any predictions about this team's demise. After all, the night of the reputed argument, both Jim and Greg wrestled brilliantly. If these two were angry at each other, they didn't show it once they were in the ring.

There is one other thing which should be pointed out. According to my sources, one thing Greg and Jim were arguing about was which of their maneuvers worked best. Strictly professional. Nothing personal. Don't write off this team. They know what they're doing. A good argument now and then keeps everybody sharp!

—Clifford Douglas

PORTLAND, ORE.—What keeps Don Leo Jonathan going? No one knows for sure. But he is a remarkable wrestler. He does more than is expected of him. He is appreciated, believe me.

When all else fails, the fans can always count on Don Leo Jonathan to show them what wrestling is all about. He is truly one of the unsung heroes of the sport, a man who should be appreciated more.

—Andy Rankowski

BANGOR, ME.—When it comes to fine human beings, Mil Mascaras is the best of the best. That he happens to be the greatest wrestler in the WWWF doesn't hurt any, either.

He has taken on almost every



JIM BRUNZELL & GREG GAGNE



DON LEO JONATHAN



MIL MASCARAS

vicious rulebreaker in the arena, and in every case, he has proven his superiority. The fans here love him, and he seems to love them just as much.

Everyone who has come into contact with Mil has been

impressed by his kind and warm manner. He is a true gentleman, one of the nicest wrestlers to come up here in quite a while.

—George Hawkins
(Continued on page 54)



POINT: JACK BRISCO

THE SPECTACLE OF 21 wrestlers grappling without any cohesion at all, the so-called battle royal, is a disgrace to the wrestling profession.

While the so-called rules, which define the victor as the wrestler who manages to either throw his victims over the ropes or pin them in the ring, might seem to be rules to some, I think they just make a mockery of my sport.

I believe these brawls should be abolished. There is very little skill involved, very little time to use any complex, scientific holds. Most of the time, these matches are just mayhem for a big payday. What usually happens is that one lucky wrestler overpowers everyone with sheer

•POINT•COUNTERPOINT•POINT•

COUNTERPOINT: BLACKJACK MULLIGAN

JACK BRISCO SAYS battle royals should be abolished because Jack Brisco is afraid of getting his pretty face spoiled in one of them. He's also probably afraid to face a real brawl for a change—a chance to show what kind of man he is instead of practicing his dainty little "scientific maneuvers."

I don't understand how Brisco can say there's no skill used in a battle royal. You use the same type of moves you'd use in a regular match, except this time you got more guys going

against you. If anything, you need more talent.

In a battle royal, you have to be able to sense someone coming up behind you while you're tangling with another guy. You have to be able to whip one guy, then still have enough strength, nerve, or whatever to keep on your feet and on your toes so you can get the next one.

And how many more referees do we need? Most battle royals have two, one idiot on the inside and one on the outside. Since Brisco doesn't choose to participate in battle royals, he doesn't know that there are too many referees now; they just get in the way of the action and bother the wrestlers. Anyway, I know most wrestlers can control themselves in

strength and tosses them over the ropes.

Rarely is anyone beaten fairly. It favors the gutter brawler, the type of guy who couldn't win a real match. People are hit from behind, and the chances of serious injury astronomically increase.

For the serious wrestler who likes to prepare himself by studying opponents beforehand, entering such a farce is ridiculous. You wouldn't catch me doing it. I wouldn't be able to use any of my really effective holds. Cowardly kicking from behind is what most of those guys seem to use.

And how can anyone follow all the action? The referees sure can't impose any kind of order in the ring. Bodies flying all over the place make it easy for cheap-shot artists to get away

with anything. The referees can't be all over the place at the same time.

We have rules which we're supposed to follow. And when they're broken, you're disqualified. But no one can get disqualified in a battle royal—unless maybe they bring a gun into the brawl with them. And even then, who's to know who fired it? Who can see it with everyone crowding the ring like so many lizards in a swamp.

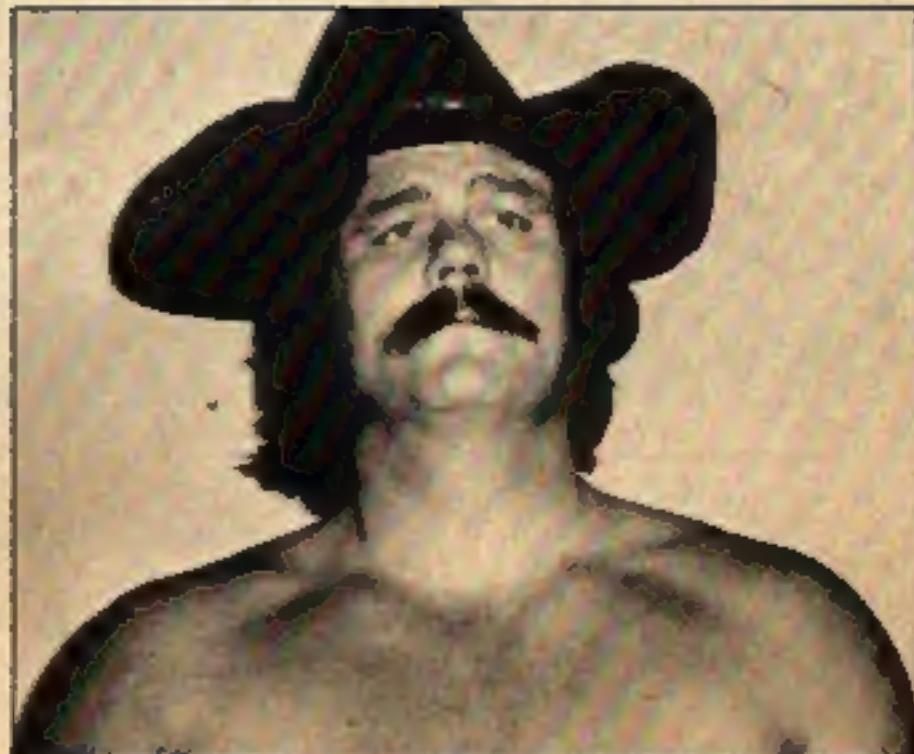
I think it deprives the fans of real wrestling pleasure. It takes away the skilled wrestlers and turns the whole thing into a gang war. Maybe the whole reason is the big money.

But if they don't abolish battle royals soon, someone is liable to get seriously injured someday. □

a battle royal. When you have just one referee, you can do more to your opponent, knowing the referee won't get too involved. Still, there isn't a lot of cowardly kicking, as Brisco says.

And the idiot fans love it. Instead of just a couple of guys—or even four in a tag team—they can see 20 of the best wrestlers around going at it, all at the same time. It has to be the best buy in town.

And what's wrong with a big payday for the winner? A guy deserves a lot of money after going through one of those. It's done in other sports. The biggest events get the biggest money. This is a business and there's nothing wrong with the champ of a battle royal. He's earned it. □



OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS

WORLD WIDE WRESTLING FEDERATION

- Champion: BOB BACKLUND
1—SUPERSTAR GRAHAM
2—DUSTY RHODES
3—SPIROS ARION
4—MIL MASCARAS
5—KEN PATERA
6—LUKE GRAHAM
7—CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW
8—PETER MAIVIA
9—STAN STASIAK
10—DINO BRAVO



SPIROS ARION



RAY STEVENS



TERRY FUNK



KEN PATERA

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

- Champion: HARLEY RACE
1—DUSTY RHODES
2—RIC FLAIR
3—DORY FUNK JR.
4—PAUL JONES
5—BLACKJACK MULLIGAN
6—Ivan Koloff
7—ROCKY JOHNSON
8—TERRY FUNK
9—JACK BRISCO
10—Ivan Putski

TAG TEAMS

- 1—RIC FLAIR & GREG VALENTINE
2—STEVE KEIRN & MIKE GRAHAM
3—GREG GAGNE & JIM BRUNZELL
4—MR. SAITO & IVAN KOLOFF
5—PROFESSOR TANAKA & MR. FUJI
6—DOMINIC DeNUCCI & DINO BRAVO
7—RAY STEVENS & PAT PATTERSON
8—PAUL JONES & RICK STEAMBOAT
9—LARRY ZBYSZKO & TONY GAREA
10—THE VALIANT BROTHERS

MOST POPULAR

- 1—DUSTY RHODES
2—ANDRE THE GIANT
3—RICK STEAMBOAT
4—MR. WRESTLING II
5—BILLY ROBINSON
6—MIL MASCARAS
7—ROCKY JOHNSON
8—Ivan Putski
9—DINO BRAVO
10—WAHOO McDANIEL

MOST HATED

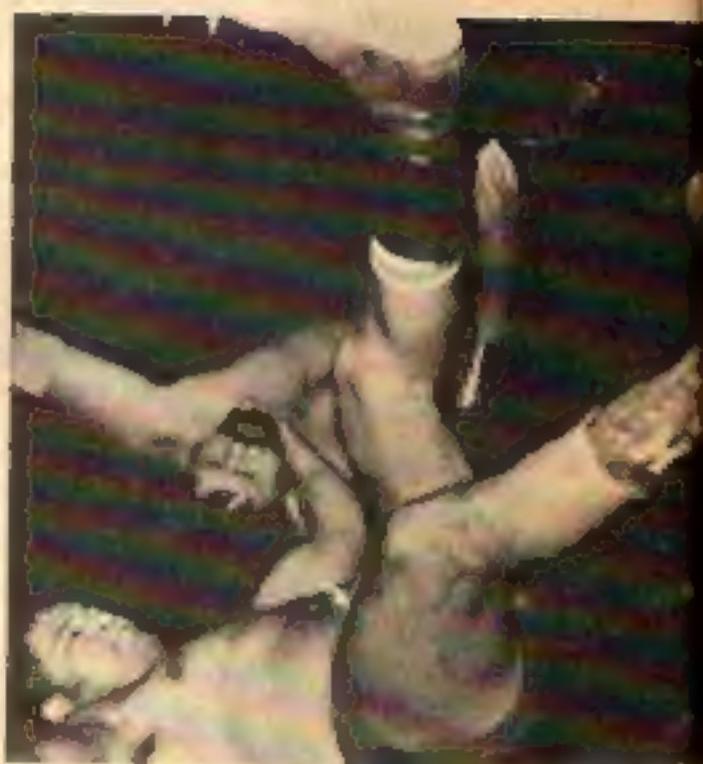
- 1—RIC FLAIR
2—KEN PATERA
3—Ivan Koloff
4—SPIROS ARION
5—GREG VALENTINE
6—OX BAKER
7—BLACKJACK MULLIGAN
8—LUKE GRAHAM
9—STAN HANSEN
10—SUPERSTAR GRAHAM

YOUR Ringside Seat For...

THE
SUPERBOWL
OF WRESTLING!

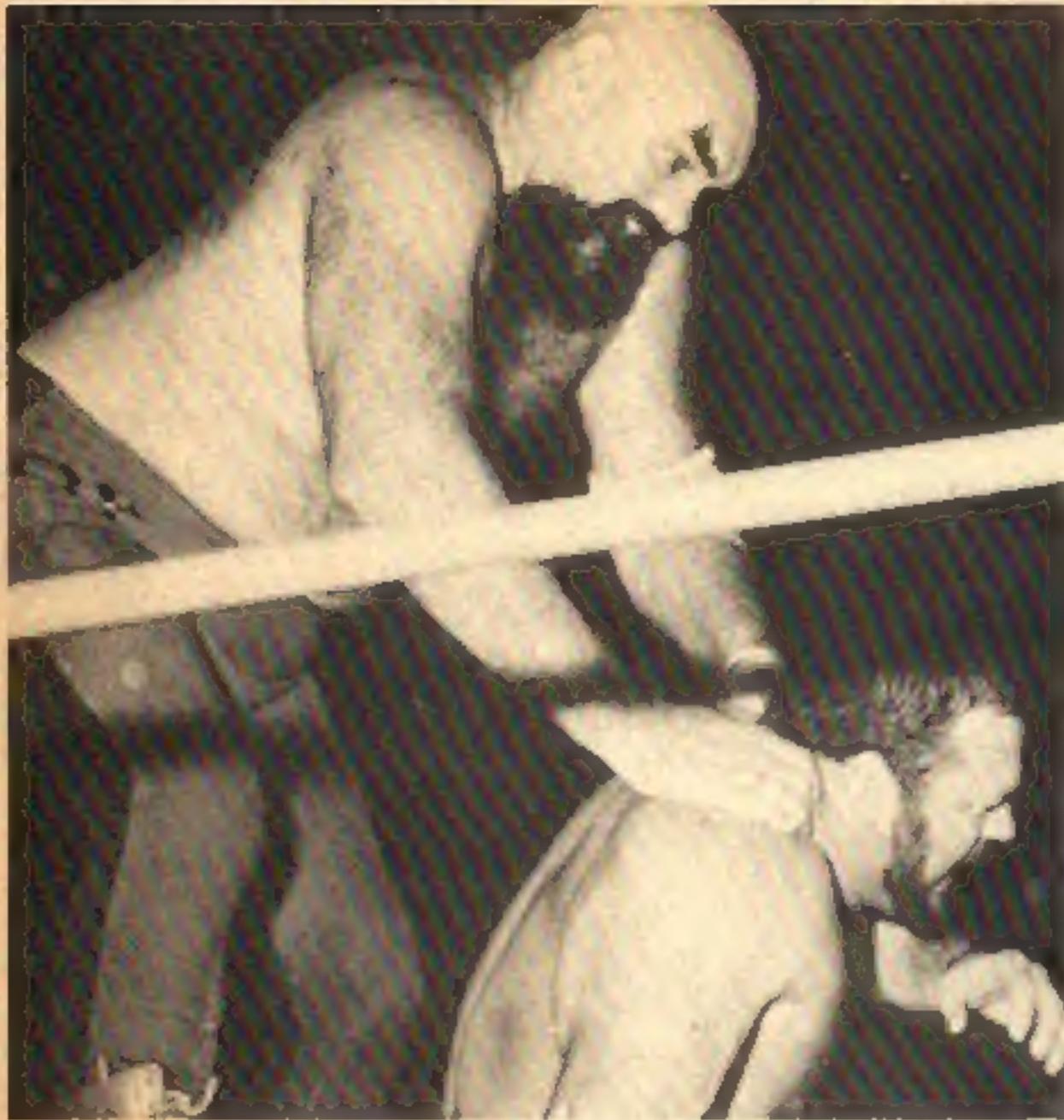


Bobby Duncum vs. Don Serrano: Duncum shows no mercy as he uses his knee to inflict as much punishment as he can on Serrano. The match lasts several minutes (in a pouring rainstorm) and Duncum eventually emerges victorious.



Chavo Guerrero vs. Tank Patton: Chavo journeyed all the way from California to show Tank who is boss (above and below).





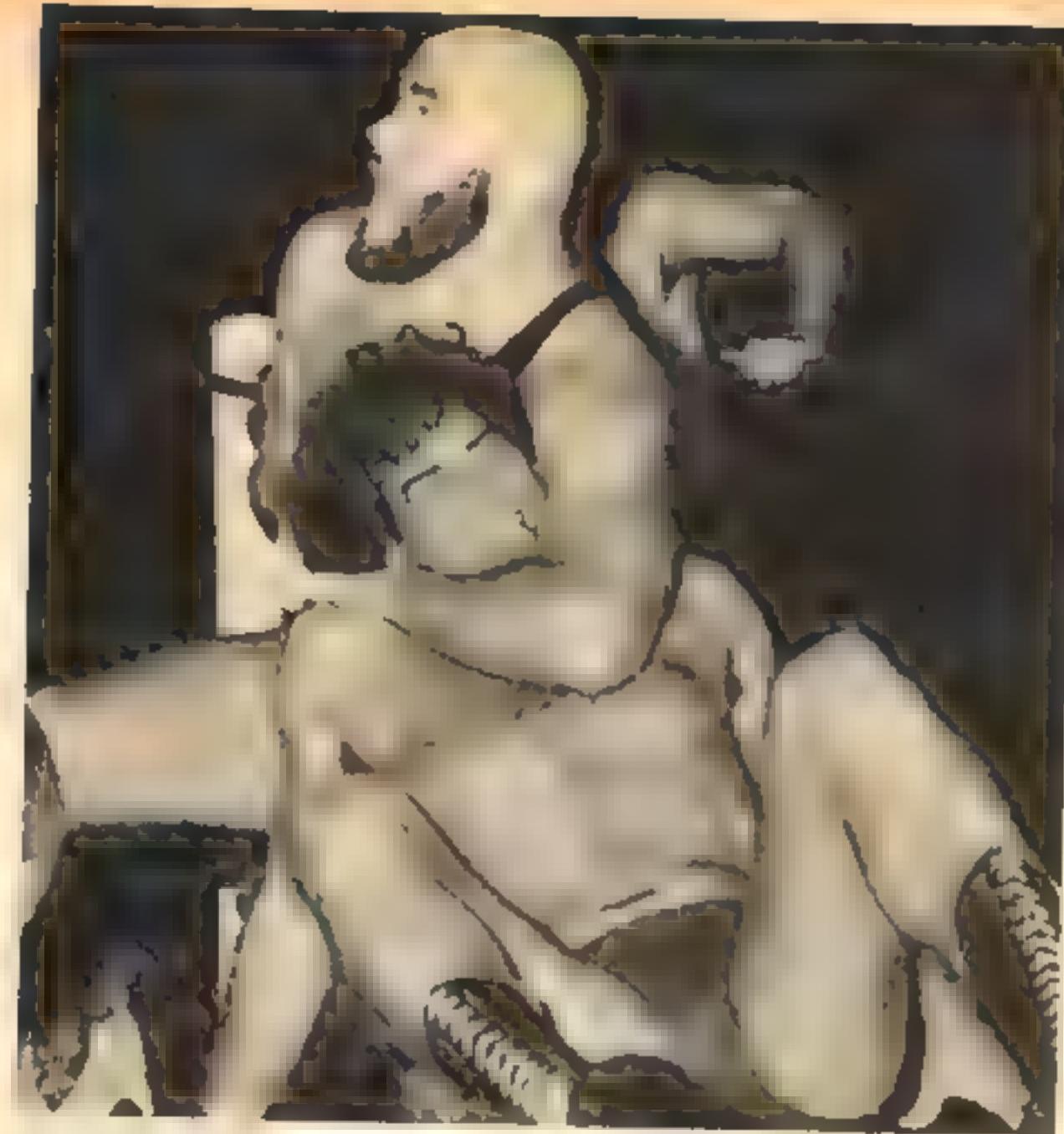
Ivan Putski vs. Ox Baker: Baker works on Ivan's neck muscles (left). This feud, brewing for weeks, came to a head the night of wrestling's superbowl.



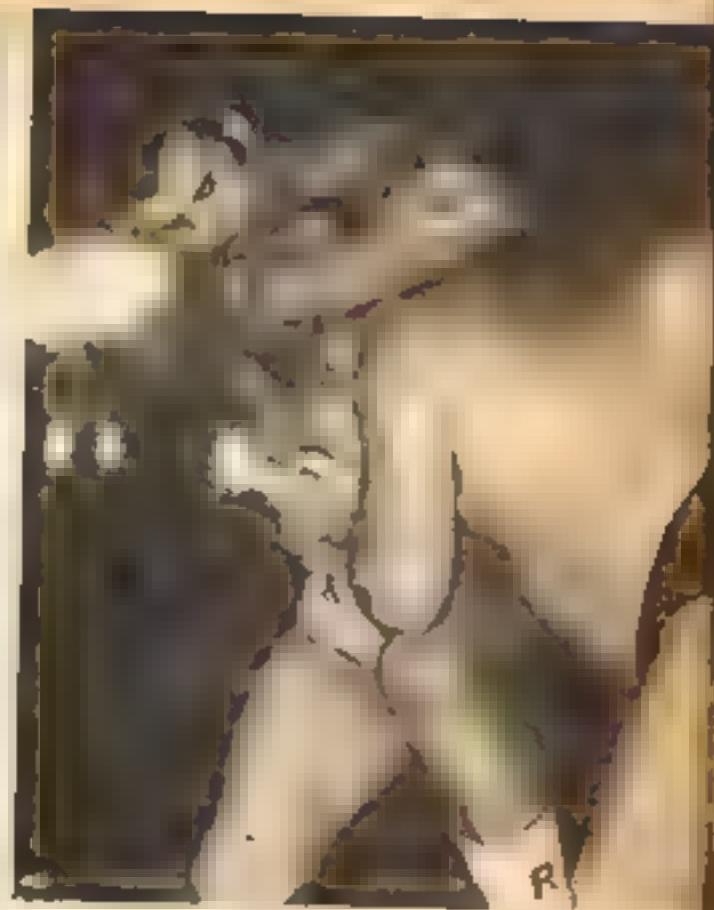
Putski whips Baker (above) and takes a controversial victory. An 8-girl battle royal (below): The action is hot and heavy, but in the end, Joyce Grable will win.



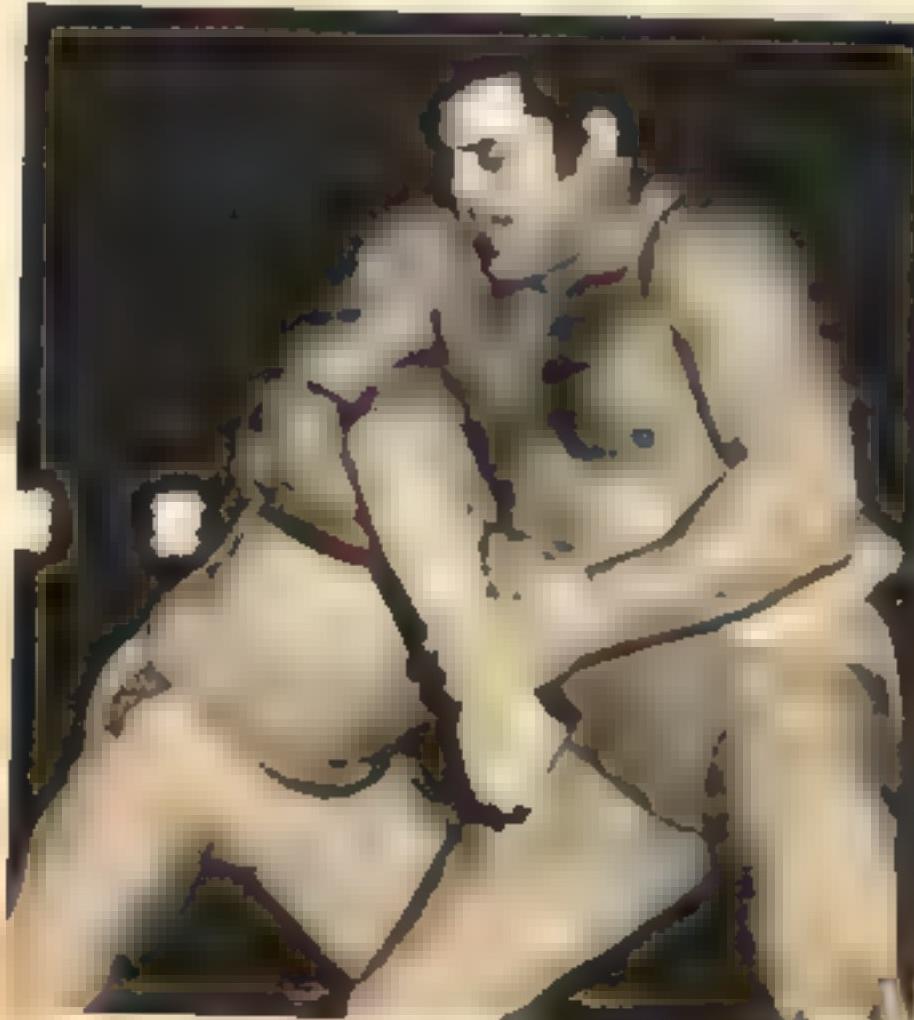
What really happened at the "Superbowl of Wrestling?"
In these exclusive photos you can see all the exciting action, just as it actually happened!



Ivan Koloff and Mr. Saito vs. Jack and Jerry Brisco: Koloff has Brisco helpless for the moment but Jack will rally and together with Jerry they will upset the team of Koloff and Saito.



Rocky Johnson vs. Killer Karl Kox: The two have squared off before, but never so viciously as this encounter. Kox used nothing but foul tactics cheating his way through until the end.



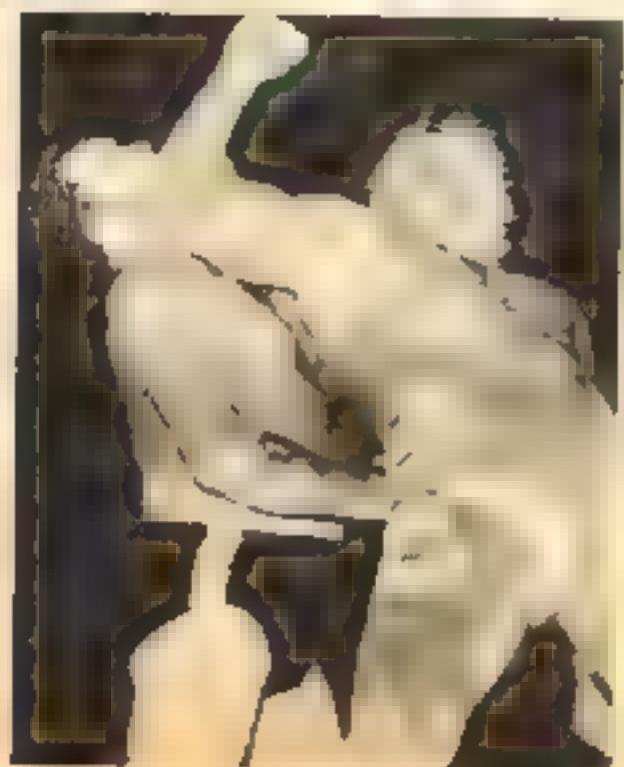
Pedro Morales vs. Lars Anderson: Pedro punishes Anderson with an armlock (above left). Anderson is in charge (above right) when he punches in desperation, trying to keep the Puerto Rican favorite grounded. Pedro was able to work his way to a hotly disputed victory.



Steve Keirn and Mike Graham vs. The Valiant Brothers (U.S. title on the line): Steve and Mike are awarded the belts as a dazed John Valiant lies in the foreground, still wanting to know what happened!



Dusty Rhodes vs. Ken Patera: Dusty uses a "bionic" headlock to stop Patera in his tracks (left). "The Strongest Man in the World" lifts huge Dusty onto a nearby turnbuckle (above).



Superstar Graham (WWWF champion) vs. Harley Race (NWA champion): Graham traps Race in a corner (above) and is about to deliver a devastating elbowsmash that he hopes will render Harley unconscious. Superstar leaps on Race (above) and tries to bring him down to the mat. He was successful.



First fall action (above) when Harley quits from Graham's bear hug. Moments are left in the match as Harley starts putting Graham to sleep (below). The time limit saved Billy



A bloody Graham is locked in an abdominal stretch (above) by Race. In a few moments, Graham will break out and render Harley a bloody mess.



The 60 minute time limit has expired. Graham is exhausted (above) as he holds onto his WWF title belt after it was returned to him. Race (right) stands in the corner and shows he is still champion after a classic match.



THOUSANDS OF LETTERS have reached our offices, from Denver to Baltimore, from Boston to Miami, from Minnesota to Houston. Ages

vary, from the very young who only vaguely know of the legend, to those fans who have grown up with Bruno Sammartino. The response has been overwhelming, the message imploringly clear:

Don't retire, Bruno Sammartino!

Bruno had turned to our pages to resolve his quandry. Retire gracefully, still full of vitality and strength? Or pursue the cruel rulebreakers like

Superstar Graham and Ric Flair, regain the belt and then drive those vicious barbarians out of the sport?

Sammartino left it up to his strongest supporters. They would decide. And they did.

"I really think you should stay in wrestling and strip Billy Graham of his title, since it's really yours," wrote Reggie Gee of Milwaukee.

"Even though you don't have the belt, the fans and I still cal-

Wrestling's living legend is at the crossroads of his life. Bruno Sammartino needs the help of fans to decide which road to take. Should Bruno retire or try to regain his title. The all-champion's fate will be decided by you!

**BRUNO
SAMMARTINO'S
LIFE
IS IN
YOUR
HANDS!**

Fans all over the world wrote in to Bruno, pleading with him not to quit the sport as a result of the article we ran (right) in which Bruno said he might have to quit wrestling.

The Fans Plead: **BRUNO, PLEASE DON'T QUIT!**

In an unprecedented move, Bruno Sammartino asked the fans whether or not he should retire. The fans have now spoken—Bruno is their hero, and they never want him to retire!



Times of triumph and sorrow for Bruno Sammartino. Above: In a brutal and agonizing match, Sammartino loses his WWWF crown, which he held for many years, to Superstar Billy Graham. Right: Bruno has his hand raised in victory after winning the WWWF belt from Buddy Rogers in 1963.

you the Champion of the WWWF. Keep going," said Artie Demarest, White House Station, New Jersey

"Sadists like Graham have to be gotten out of wrestling so true champs like you can wear the belt again. Get Graham, Bruno, for all your loyal fans," pleaded Jennifer Pace, Ft Lauderdale

And on and on, piles of letters which filled our desks, gave the mailman a backache, gave us eyestrain from reading them all. Keep wrestling Bruno. You've given us all these memories, now give us some more. You're still the best there ever was.

When Sammartino opened his heart in our magazine, he took a gamble, without

calculation, a chance which flowed from his soul. He would have willingly done whatever his fans had said, with a little sadness, perhaps, with a little regret that the mission he feels he must pursue would have forever gone unfulfilled.

Now, with support solidly behind him, the legions ready to rally behind him in his relentless drive to cleanse the sport, Bruno just wanted to thank everyone.

"When I heard the response, I was overwhelmed; I really just wanted to cry from joy," Bruno said. "In my heart I thought the fans would want me to go on, but I didn't know for certain. That isn't a knock on them; I thought it might be time for



someone else to carry the torch of scientific wrestling

"It wasn't just the words they wrote which got to me. It was the reasons why. One fan said

that no one else had the courage I had, the complete belief in the rightness of my mission. Another said that since Graham stole the title, wrestling had gone downhill, and it was my duty to get the belt back and put wrestling back to the clean sport it once was.

"Many people wondered why I went this way to resolve my decision. They asked what would happen if the fans had grown tired of me or if a new wave of fans had taken over, fans who were fond of those malicious thieves like Graham. I knew that couldn't be. At first I said I would have accepted whatever the fans decided. But I would have been disappointed if they had chosen Graham over me, if they had been taken in by his deceitful claims and really believed he was the champ and not a gutter burglar."

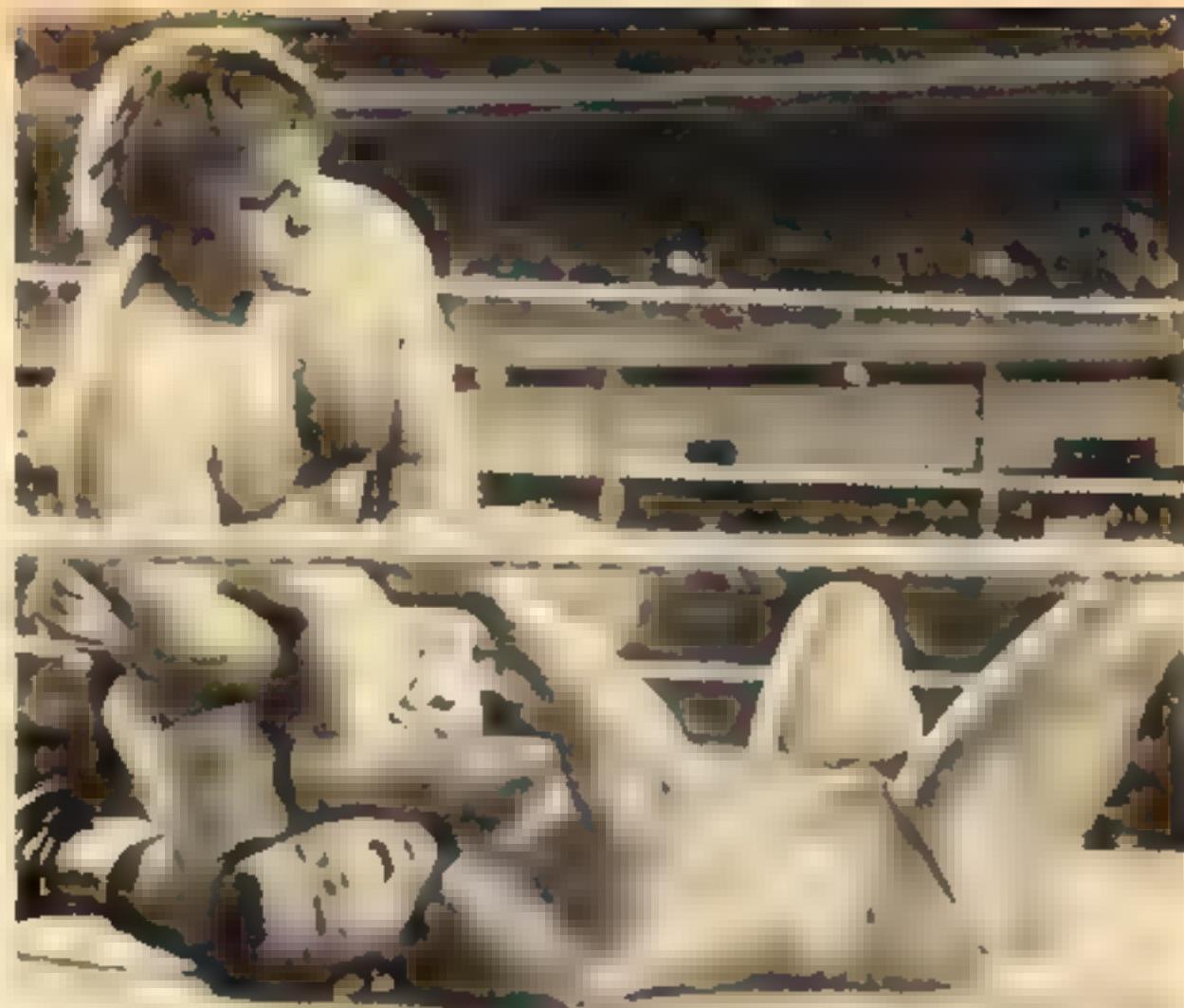
Of course, there were fans who believed that Bruno's time had come, who actually thought that Graham and his life were the real geniuses of wrestling.

"Why don't you leave Billy Graham alone? Are you going to sing sour grapes the rest of your life just because Graham is better than you are? Why don't you go home, Bruno," wrote Estelle Fitzgerald, Brooklyn, New York.

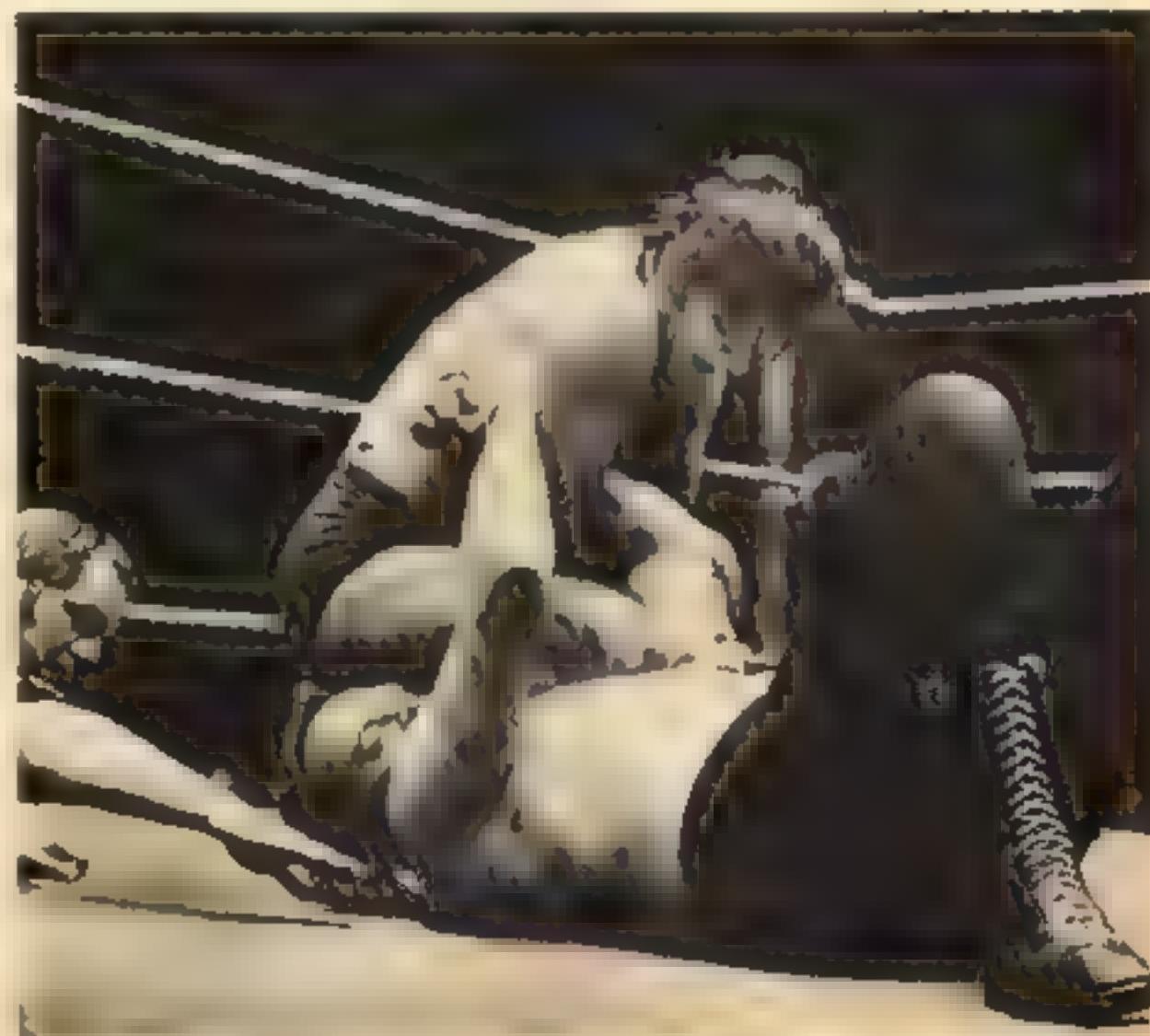
"Billy Graham knows how to act like a champ. Wrestling has never been better than with Graham and Race as champs. If you become belt-holder again, I'll never attend another match," said Paul Cummingsford, Rock Island, Illinois.

These are only a few disgruntled notes in an otherwise perfectly tuned symphony exhorting Bruno to return to the wars. Not that Bruno ignored them.

"Those people are entitled to their opinions. And I listen to them as carefully as I listen to my fans. What I want to do is



One of the all-time great confrontations pitted then WWWF champion Pedro Morales against Bruno Sammartino. This battle (above) is now considered a classic. One of Bruno's best efforts was against Stan Stasiak (below) on the night he regained his WWWF title. All agree Bruno was superb.



show them how wrong they are. Oh, I'm really delighted to have my fans urge me to wrestle and not to retire that I'm at a loss for words.

"More than convincing me that retiring would be wrong, those letters did a really important thing. It made me believe in people again." □

Now when people talk about the Gagne family, most of the discussion will center around young Greg. He has taken the mantle from father Verne. Now Greg is the Gagne all men must fear

THE GAGNE DYNASTY GOES ON

A DYNASTY REQUIRES more than one champion, however successful he may be. There must be a successor who sustains the triumph over a long number of years. Without this continuity, discussion of such a dynasty, as in the case of the Gagne family, is mere empty hopefulness.

The long-awaited prolongation of the Gagne victories has now arrived. With a brilliant performance in his match against AWA champion Nick Bockwinkle, Greg Gagne has taken the ebbing torch from his father's hands, blown into it a gusty flame, and shown he may soon become the AWA belt-holder.

For many years Verne Gagne was the AWA champion. A few years ago, he lost the belt to Nick Bockwinkle. Attempts to regain it ended in failure. As he became less and less active, Verne and the rest of the wrestling community, waited for son Greg to bring the belt back into the Gagne home. And waited. And waited.

"I just didn't feel I was ready to leap into the ring against Bockwinkle," Greg explained. "I'm proud of my father, but I

didn't want to get a title match just because I was Verne Gagne's son. Proving myself as a champion in my own right was important, so I teamed up with Jim Brunzell and avoided title matches until the time was right."

The moment has certainly arrived. Not only has Greg honed his skill as AWA tag team champion the past few years, but his conditioning has been extensive, even grim, as he prepared for the AWA title match.

"Every morning I bounced out of bed, put 'Gonna Fly Now' on the stereo and started my workouts. Sometimes I believed that I went through that hellish preparation as much to be physically ready as to push aside the fear of failing and letting down my father. We spoke every day and he never once mentioned the family tradition. That took a lot of pressure off me. He just told me to remember everything he ever taught me, everything I ever learned, and not to stoop to any alley tactics he knew Bockwinkle would use."

Bockwinkle proved Verne
(Continued on page 58)

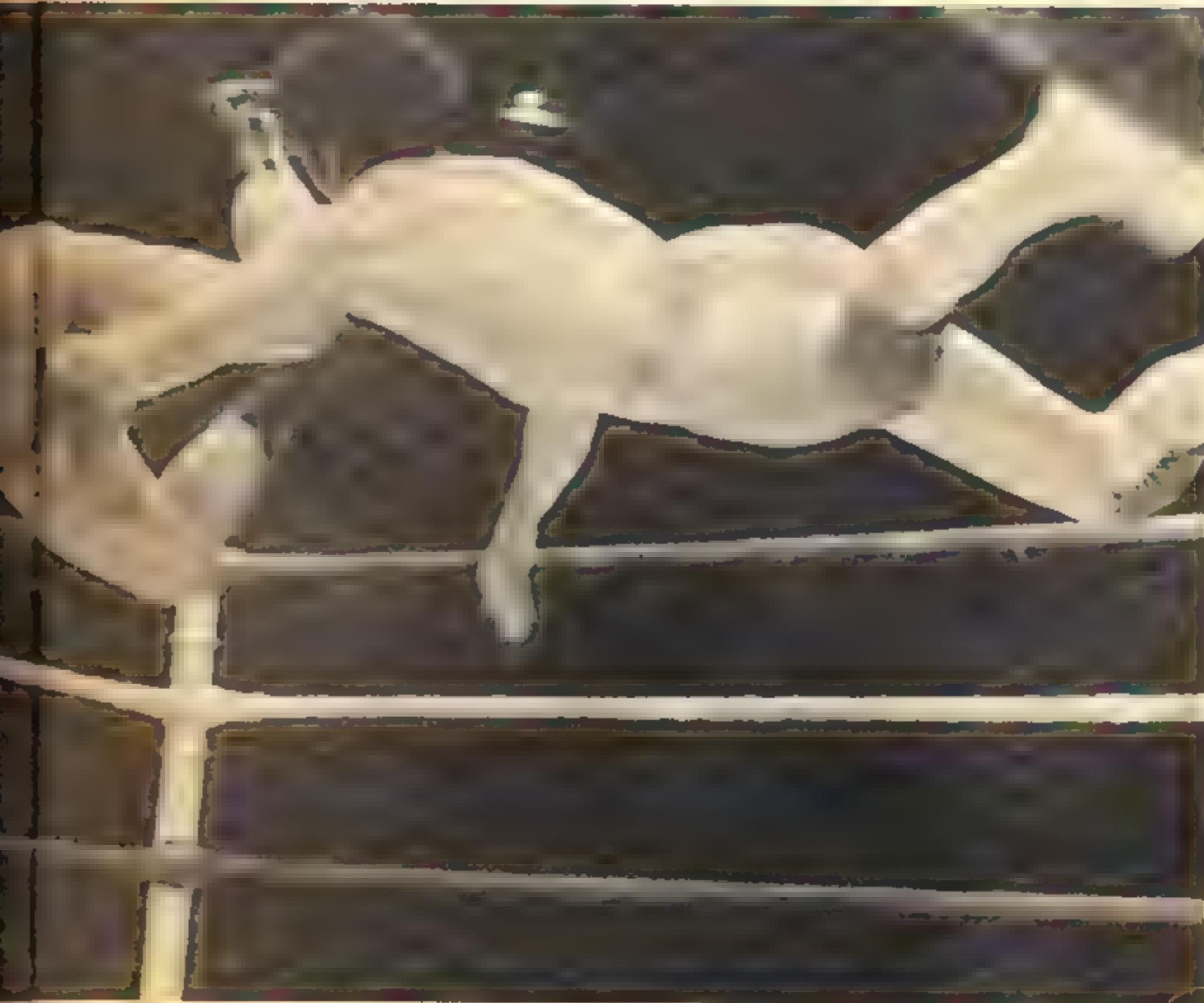




In a recent match against Bockwinkle (left, right, and bottom), Greg was truly sensational! He has proven that he has all the necessary skills to take the AWA belt.



SEASON



THEY SAID Rick Steamboat was too young. They said he was too green. They said he'd be eaten alive, that his angelic features would be marred by the villainous opponents he was scheduled to face.

So much for the expertise of the experts.

Several months ago dire predictions of impending doom were being issued for Steamboat's fledgling career. Time and again his scientific style of wrestling bested his

malevolent foes. Still his victories failed to silence the critics. If anything, the experts became more insistent that it would all catch up with him, that he was lucking out.

For Steamboat, the doubts became as menacing as a



In an amazing display of his strength and skills, Rick Steamboat has his vicious opponent, Blackjack Mulligan, all tied up. Rick has proven that the experts can be wrong: He has continued to defeat every veteran rulebreaker he takes on. He keeps becoming better and better!

RICKY STEAMBOAT PROVES THE EXPERTS CAN

neckcrusher. When would the experts admit they were wrong?

Ironically, it wasn't a convincing victory that finally quieted the critics and elevated Steamboat to a position as a genuine future champion. It was a violent war approaching Armageddon between Steamboat and Blackjack Mulligan, which ended in a one-hour draw, that prompted several experts to reconsider their comments.

"Okay, so the guy is good and he wasn't rushed ahead of time. We can be wrong," snapped a tired expert too ashamed to be identified in print.

"I still think they should have prepared him more. I guess we underestimated Steamboat. He

could wear the belt someday," declared another veteran observer of the wrestling scene.

It may seem amazing that one non-title match, a draw, yet, should so radically change such stubborn opinion. But that is what happened.

Mulligan opened the event with an animalistic roar, precisely the sort of unnerving strategy which other opponents have used to rattle the young man. As before, it didn't work. Carmiy, Rick challenged Blackjack with a crunching backbreaker followed by a destructive back flip which deposited Mulligan flat on his back. Undaunted, Mulligan



Mulligan appears to be almost helpless against Rick's scientific maneuvers. It is a testament to Steamboat's ability that he overcame Blackjack's challenge.

RICK STEAMBOAT IS BE WRONG

Experts from all over the world said Rick Steamboat was doing too much too soon. But he has proven them all wrong. He has taken on the toughest competition in the sport and been triumphant

picked Steamboat up and tossed him into his own corner.

Steamboat lay crumpled in the corner, not really knowing where he was. He shook his head, hoping to clear the cobwebs, and then, like a coiled spring, he assaulted Blackjack with two right backhands and an open-fisted karate thrust to the chest.

Mulligan reeled against the ropes. He grabbed Steamboat by the throat and began shaking him. Would Rick finally succumb?

Adroitly, Steamboat grabbed Mulligan's knee and spun him around. As Blackjack revolved for the second time, Rick barrelled his skull into Mulligan's stomach, sucking the air out of the malicious monster and dumping him on the ground.

Mulligan rose and tore at Steamboat, digging his pointed nails into Rick's face. Blood spurted down the handsome young face. Surely the sight of his own blood would rattle him.

Unperturbed, Steamboat put

Mulligan in a classic headlock and squeezed ferociously. Blackjack bellowed in pain, tried to free himself, yet couldn't.

"I wanted him to see what it felt like to hurt from a legal hold," Steamboat declared.

Surprised mutters emerged from observers. A wrestler the calibre of Mulligan was being upended by this youngster. But Mulligan was supposed to be the one to puncture Steamboat's fantasy. How could this be? (Continued on page 62)

Bob Backlund vs. Ken Patera:



IT HASN'T BEEN easy for Bob Backlund. His boyish good looks have instigated considerable envy from opponents who admittedly wanted to smash his handsome features into a bloody pulp, which they have tried to do at times. And his meticulously scientific approach has been scoffed at by those who believe a champion must be able to glide around rules now and then and sink down into the gutter with a genuine rulebreaker.

To paraphrase a famous tune to all this doubt, Backlund spit out and did it his way, finishing off his steady climb towards the top with a brilliant victory over Ken Patera.

"You know what it's like to really want something and have people say you won't ever make it, even when you know deep in your gut you have what it takes?" Backlund asked. "I can't help it if some people think I might be good looking. Talk to my parents about that. I only worry about the way I wrestle."

"Battling like some brawling rulebreaker—maybe I could do that, but heck, that's just not me. You can't change the way you really are and I want to wrestle the right way without those illegal holds."

The self-proclaimed world's strongest man, evil Ken Patera, was taught a painful lesson.

THE MAKING OF A CHAMP!



Above: Ken thinks he has a good bearhug on Backlund but Bob will manage to get himself free. Right: A painful armlock has Ken in agony. Bob showed Patera his scientific maneuvers can triumph over Ken's rulebreaking ways!

when Professor Backlund held class recently

Patera's conceited cries echoed through the hearty boos which greeted him as he entered the ring

"Doctor Backlund, I presume," Patera cackled. "Today I'll show you how to wrestle. Better find a bag to put over your pretty face, because I'm going to twist it into one maimed knot."

As the match started, it was difficult to determine who was teaching whom. Repeatedly, Patera charged forward like a wounded animal and grabbed Backlund about the head, wrestling him into a spin and then bouncing Bob off the ropes.

Backlund was ensnared in several near-crippling neck-



Bob Backlund has already proven he has what it takes to be one of the greatest champions in wrestling history. This match against Ken Patera shows just how great he really can be!

ITION !

In effect of strength, Backlund bridges backwards so he can spring forward and overcome Patera's hold.



holds late in the first fall. Yet he didn't resort to any bestial moves, merely held his ground and wriggled free of the straining Patera. At one point, with Patera visibly laughing as he started to choke Backlund, Bob effortlessly pulled free with a twisting gesture of his legs and flung the astonished Patera onto the canvas.

"Someday Backlund isn't going to be able to slide free like

that and he's gonna get caught real bad," a ringside observer commented acidly

"Ever since I turned pro in 1974, there have been people who have criticized my approach to the sport," Backlund said. "When I started, I knew exactly what I wanted and how I was going to achieve it. But I have to admit, I did start having inner doubts. The first match I had, and I don't even remember who

it was against, but it was some mean fellow, let me tell you. He nearly ripped my ears off. It isn't easy fighting back the impulse to return dirt with dirt, and I struggled against that as much as I did my first few opponents. But the satisfaction of defeating somebody scientifically, without any vicious holds, more than made up for the pain and suffering my

(Continued on page 64)

In a violent match against Rocky Johnson, Dick Slater proved just how vicious a man he can be. But there are other times when Dick will employ only scientific moves!

WHO WILL DICK SLATER BE TODAY?

DICK SLATER APPROACHED Rocky Johnson, growled ominously and thrust his fingers into Johnson's windpipe. Dazed, Rocky was vulnerable to a kick in the groin and a poke in his eyes. Slater danced around the ring, snarling at the jeers of the crowd.

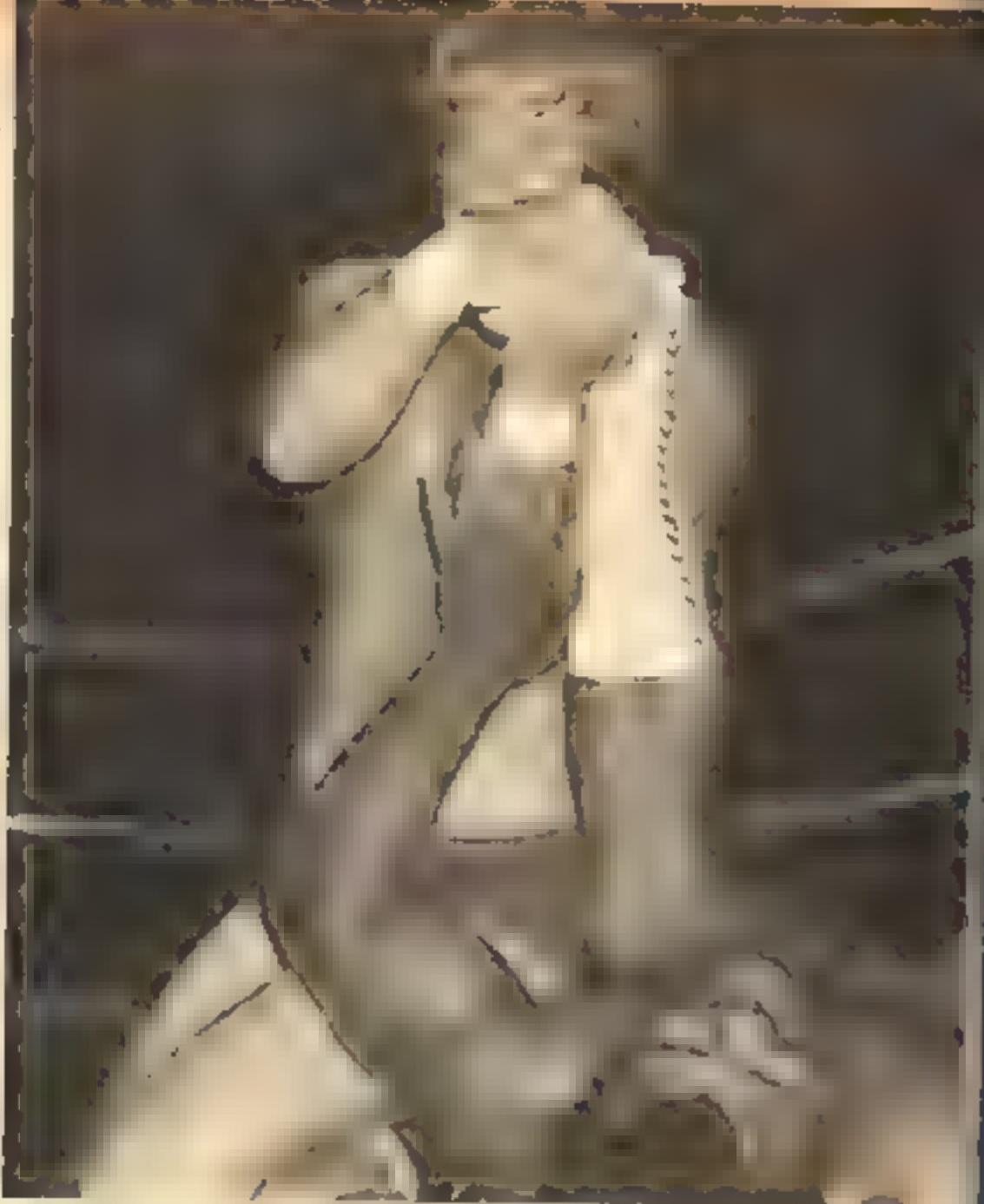
Stan Hansen grabbed Dick

Slater under the armpits and attempted to smash his skull against the ropes. Slater whirled, tripped Hansen and delivered punishing elbow-smashes to Hansen's spine as the crowd bellowed its approval.

Villain or hero? Madman or scientific wrestler? Which one is the real Dick Slater?

Slater's career has been chameleon-like, though at least with that animal its color may be predicted by the hue of its surroundings. Slater has no such determinate Bad guy in St. Louis. Good guy in Georgia. Bad guy in Georgia. Good guy in St. Louis. No pattern whatsoever, though one close friend offered

One day, Dick Slater is a vicious rulebreaker. The next day, he is an intelligent, scientific wrestler. No one can ever predict just how Slater will wrestle on any given day. And that is just the way he wants it.





With a quick kick to the head, Slater tries to prevent Rocky Johnson from reentering the ring. Dick displayed some of his most vicious tactics on this night. It is remarkable that a man who seems so wicked at some times can be so scientific at other times. Slater remains a mystery to all.

an explanation

"Dick has this thing about inner vibes. He got into reading books on a vibration cult when he was on the Coast many years ago," said a friend of Slater's. "There are times when he feels good about himself, good about his opponent, about his world, and he reacts accordingly by treating people with decency. Then there are times he feels vicious and so goes into the ring like that. Unfortunately, no one

except Slater knows which way he'll go."

Slater's unpredictable behavior has created some memorable moments in wrestling, such as his venomous feuds with Paul Jones and Mr. Wrestling II. Then, on the opposite end of the spectrum, there is his partnership with Dusty Rhodes and his recent combination with old rival Mr. Wrestling II in Georgia.

"When I told people I wanted

to team with Slater, they were astonished," said Rhodes. "One person close to me wondered how I could think of it, wondered what guarantees I had that Slater wouldn't suddenly turn on me. But I took him for his style and I gambled. Can't say we didn't make a great team."

"The first time we got together as a team I was reluctant to stick my hand out for a tag," Mr. Wrestling II remembered. "I didn't know if Slater would tag it

or bite it. We had a real feud going a while ago. Yet Slater was a complete gentleman and there was never a problem. Though I do realize that in another week he'd want to rip my face off. Go figure him out. I can't. I don't know anyone who can."

An explanation would seem to be in order from the source himself. Welcome, Dick Slater.

"The reason people are so bewildered is that I simply demonstrate the two halves of every person, and people won't admit that they can be both good and bad. So when I reveal the two components of Dick Slater, people are afraid because they'll be forced to confront their own personalities, thus they put me down and label me unpredictable so they won't have to face themselves."

"You telling me no one has ever been downright nasty to another person? Or really good to someone else? Or turn around and for some reason berate another person. Of course they do. How many will admit that though? And since people are irrational at times, how can I predict how I'll be tomorrow? Can you? Can anyone?"

Rocky Johnson must have wished he could have figured out what Slater would do on a recent evening in St. Louis. As the wrestlers approached each other after the opening bell, Slater inexplicably extended his



Above: Slater prepares to land a powerful elbowsmash on Spoiler's head. Dick dazzled everyone with his scientific skills. Below: Mr. Wrestling II and Slater have formed an unbeatable tag team. To many, this seems like a most unusual alliance. No one knows how long it can last.

hand for a shake. Taken aback, Johnson offered his hand. Slater violently tore at the hand and flung Rocky across the ring and into the ropes. As the puzzled Johnson ricocheted back toward the middle of the ring, Slater pummeled Rocky's face with vicious hand thrusts, drawing trickles of blood on Johnson's cheek.

"My vibes indicated that I was in a hateful mood," Slater said calmly in his dressing room. "I felt ill with the world. The vibrations resonating about me from Johnson, and from the crowd, reinforced my own vibes of bad, and so I was evil. Rocky would have done the same thing if he were honest with himself."

For a brief moment in the match, Johnson's handsome face curled into a venial sneer. That was followed by a questionable swipe at Slater's turned back and a quick, barely conspicuous kick near the groin. It passed, but Slater eagerly pounded on it to make his point.

"I wasn't upset by it because I knew Johnson was giving way to his natural instincts. Just like you and me, baby," Slater said. □



Emmanuelle appears helpless when Jenny tries to savagely choke the beautiful brunette. Fortunately, the ferocious battler was able to break away

THOUGH HE TRIED to change the handwriting so she wouldn't know it was from him, he couldn't help himself from putting the correct return address on the envelope. Jenny shook her head and ripped up this letter

It was just like Dan to be so bad at trickery. His Boston Brahmin ancestors never learned to be sly. She didn't like ripping up the letter unread, but it would be better than answering him. So she dropped the shreds in a trash can and hailed a cab for the airport.

As Jenny had feared, her fiance Dan had heard about her apartment wrestling career (SPORTS REVIEW WRESTLING/March 1977). He had demanded she give up the spectacle. If he had asked, she would never have wrestled again. But he had demanded

If this wasn't bad enough, Dan's father had paid her a visit. He came armed with a check for \$50,000, "which is an acceptable sum for ladies in your profession." It was hers if she never saw his son again. She took the money, donated it to worthy causes Dan's father was born to despise, and never saw Dan again. Men who think they can buy you think they can own you. Dan was his father's son.

So Jenny remained a stewardess and an apartment wrestler. Beautiful women never want for company, and



THE UNCHAINED AM APARTMENT

When a beautiful young woman like Jenny goes into battle, no one can predict what will happen. This untamed wildcat is so furious a warrior she has overcome some of the greatest apartment wrestlers. But then she encountered Emmanuelle, and equal fury met equal fury!



Jenny's long, lithe body is painfully stretched over the knee of her beautiful competitor (above). Emmanuelle is just quick enough to prevent Jenny from delivering a very furious blow to the French-Canadian woman's stomach (left).

Jenny had a full life. The only sorrow in her life were reports that Dan had taken to drinking a little too much. He would recover, people said. He had recovered the other times it had happened.

Apartment wrestling became the most important thing in

Jenny's life. With easy access to transportation, she wrestled all over the world, thrilling the most powerful men in over a dozen countries. To those with power and influence, her beauty became legendary. Men rearranged their busy schedules just to see her wrestle. When

she was challenged by Emmanuelle, men came from as far away as Japan to the New York penthouse where the match would be held.

Emmanuelle captured the imagination of apartment wrestling fans from her very first match. A French-Canadian

UNED FURY OF Part WRESTLER



Emmanuelle uses all her power to try to keep Jenny down on the plush carpet (above). However the beautiful blonde will be able to regain her footing, and soon she is torturing Emmanuelle (below), digging her talon-like nails into the brunette's long



beauty, her majesty as an athlete was evident from the first moment she strode into a penthouse. Some women are born to high fashion. Emmanuelle is radiant in a bikini. There is a beauty the camera never catches; it comes from the electric excitement of a

woman's physical presence. Emmanuelle is just such a woman.

The brunette dominated the Montreal scene within two months of her first battle. Even Margaret Trudeau's escapades couldn't compete with reports of Emmanuelle's latest matches. It took only a few months more before she thrilled audiences in New York's most fashionable penthouses. Soon, every apartment wrestling crowd knew of her glory. It was only natural for her to challenge Jenny for unofficial supremacy.

Dave Moll, the man behind apartment wrestling's rise to international success, was the man Emmanuelle contacted. He had set up the best matches and everything had to be perfect for this one. Moll went to work the moment his phone call from Emmanuelle was over.

Moll had his secretary put in a direct call to Munich. Ozzie Junger, international industrialist and apartment wres-

tling's European overseer, was asked if Munich might not be the best site for this internationally-awaited battle. Junger promised to have everything in readiness within two months. This would give everyone invited a chance to make arrangements.

All over the world, meetings were cancelled, deadlines pushed back, openings postponed, and airline tickets to Munich became very precious. Munich airport became flooded with requests for private jet landings. Over 200 people were invited to the match. No one refused. Those not invited offered up to \$5,000 for an invitation. But as one rebuffed purchaser mourned, "How can I buy anything from a man who owns his own jet?"

Emmanuelle's body seemed to float on air as she walked off the Junger's private jet, which had been thoughtfully sent by the multi-millionaire to fetch the





Montreal beauty As for Jenny, she had no trouble getting work on a flight to Munich. The airline's president was one of the spectators.

As befits an international gathering of the famous and powerful, there was a gala affair to welcome them. Jenny and Emmanuelle were the guests of honor. A famed Paris designer had requested the honor of outfitting the beauties for this event. The first skirmish in their battle took place at the party. Each woman tried to be more regally beautiful than her rival. Everyone agreed this battle was a draw.



People will never forget the first time the two women laid eyes on each other. They were across a large ballroom. Suddenly, they both stood transfixed by the sight of their future opponent. The room seemed to grow quieter as the women measured each other across a long distance. Their eyes were like jungle cats devouring prey. They must have stared at each other for over two minutes. Although they remained in the same room for the next few hours, neither woman looked at the other again. Each had learned all she needed to know.

The night of the match found limousines lined up in front of the luxury apartment building where Ozzie Junger's penthouse took up the 38th and 39th floors. The women had spent the day there, resting and preparing themselves for the coming battle. Each beauty was allowed to indulge her every whim. No two more contented combatants ever faced each other.

The evening began with dinner for the guests; 200 spectators were served the meal ordered by them the day before. Munich's most fashionable restaurant was closed for the

(Continued on page 44)

Above: Emmanuelle grabs Jenny's right leg and prepares to sink her teeth into the soft thigh flesh. Below: A tangle of arms and legs confuses the spectators as limbs fly in all directions. Kicks and punches landed on both beautiful women as the battle became more furious.

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THE UNCHAINED FURY

(Continued from Page 43)



It is hard to tell which woman is really in control here. Though Emmanuelle is on top of her blonde opponent, Jenny is using her legs like a vise—slowly closing in on the blonde's torso with powerful fury!

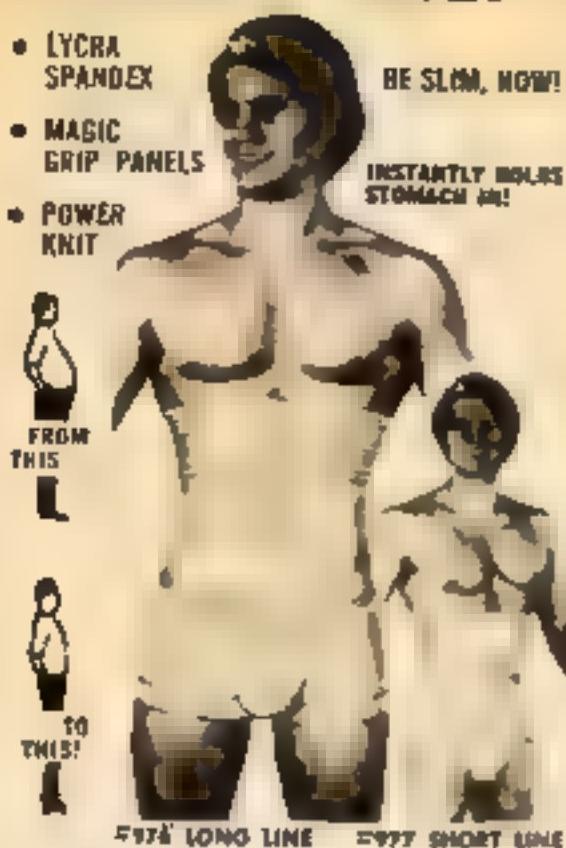
evening, its entire staff was employed by Junger.

After dinner came the brandy and cigars. The grapplers waited coolly while the gathering settled down. Neither woman wanted to betray her emotions. Though the seconds must have seemed like hours, there were no complaints or signs of tension. It was as if both women were hoarding their energy for the coming battle.

When the moment finally came, both women strode slowly into the room, as if they were lionesses. Every muscle in both their bodies rippled as they approached. Some men found themselves unable to stare at their blazing eyes. Others couldn't take their gaze away from the ladies. A few remember trembling before the match started. (Continued on page 46)

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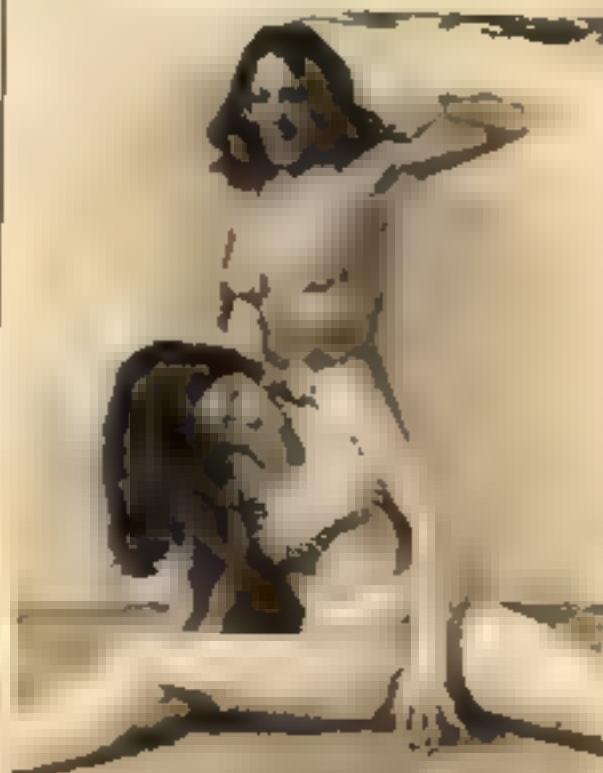
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THE UNCHAINED FURY

(Continued from Page 44)



Jenny clutches Emmanuelle's head and slowly twists it, causing a horrifying agony (above). Then she prepares to deliver a stunning punch (below).



"There is no need for introductions," Junger announced. "Ladies, begin!"

There were no quick leaps that mark the inexperienced. The two

women slowly circled each other, hands flicking out to make contact. The slap of flesh resounded throughout the room as the two beauties came closer and closer together. Their cold smiles and flashing eyes foretold the imminent explosion.

It came. Jenny lunged for Emmanuelle's mid-section, wrapping her arms around the blonde's waist. A quick jerk brought Emmanuelle off her feet and toppling to the floor. Within an instant, both women were on the floor.

Jenny immediately realized her mistake. So early in the battle, Emmanuelle still had all her strength. The victim quickly escaped from beneath her tormentor. Now both women were on their knees, facing each other from one foot away. An instant later, the slap of colliding flesh resounded as the women

wrapped their arms around each other in violent embrace. They were soon on the floor again, this time slowly twisting and turning.

The two women appeared as one misshapen body trying to destroy itself. Their movements were short and lethal. Nails dug into flesh as red welts exploded on a abaster skin. Arms and legs squeezed with savage power. The effect could be heard in the involuntary grunts and moans escaping through clenched teeth. These were the only sounds in the room.

In an almost motionless warfare, Emmanuelle gained the advantage. Jenny's legs started kicking wildly, trying to escape the skilled torture. Emmanuelle, secure in her advantage, kept up the agonizing pressure. What began as a contest of equals was now a fight for a woman's life.

A shriek pierced the air, the kind of shout a kung-fu master screams before delivering his blows. Emmanuelle spun off her victim, the brunette's hand clutching the side of her head. Only a few spectators saw Jenny smash her fist into Emmanuelle's temple. The blow had accompanied the scream. It was Emmanuelle, however, who had received the pain.

The brunette rolled along the floor, struggling to get to her feet. The blow had been devastating, the short shot to the head that often ended boxing matches. Emmanuelle's eyes, rolling wildly, revealed her fear. In a few more seconds, Jenny would be able to attack, her strength returned. Could Emmanuelle recover in time?

The question was answered as Emmanuelle hurtled to the wall, her exquisite body rendered spastic by the force of the blow. She hadn't recovered in time. Jenny was on the

(Continued on page 48)

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THE UNCHAINED FURY

(Continued from Page 47)



These two women, so evenly matched, found their battle's end embroiled in controversy. There will be a rematch!

warpath, using every ounce of her strength in an awesome assault

Like a hawk tearing at its victim, Jenny twisted and yanked at Emmanuelle's body. The blonde's body flopped across the carpet as a semi-conscious agony flooded her senses. Still, the woman refused to surrender. But could even the strongest will survive this onslaught?

Jenny grabbed at her foe's leg and lifted it high in the air. With an animal grunt, she dug her teeth into her victim's calf. It was her worst mistake of the evening.

The pain gave Emmanuelle power. She kicked as hard as she could. The force of the kick sent Jenny spinning. Emmanuelle was free. Jenny was also hurt.

The two women rose to their feet slowly. Legs trembled from the weight. Weakened but determined, the beauties marshalled their strength for one last confrontation. The fury

would explode for one last time. It was astonishing.

For 15 minutes, the action never let up. The Amazons twisted, scratched, yanked, punched, kicked, and mauled each other without mercy. There was no let up. Two sweating bodies brawled to the full extent of their abilities. Driven by a will power few of us will ever understand, they went at each other as if their lives depended on it. In some ways, they did.

The action reached its peak when Emmanuelle delivered a perfect kick to Jenny's belly. The blonde doubled over as she gasped for breath. Her beautiful tormentor leaped at the fallen victim, strong fingers wrapping around an exposed throat. Jenny squirmed to free herself as she gasped for air. Emmanuelle's fingers shook from exhaustion as the pressure from her grasp strained her every muscle.

Desperately, Jenny's long arms reached for her torturer's hair. With all her strength, Jenny yanked as hard as she could. Emmanuelle struggled to maintain her grasp but couldn't keep the fingers from slipping off.

Jenny rolled free. Emmanuelle tried to relax for an instant. Jenny took that moment and leaped on her foe's back. Jenny's arm snaked around the blonde's throat, squeezing as hard as possible. Spittle drooled down Emmanuelle's scarlet lips while she desperately gasped for air.

A convulsive heave of her body saved Emmanuelle from doom. Both bodies were so slick with sweat that Jenny slid off when Emmanuelle moved. The blonde's strength was unequal to the superhuman task of

sustaining the attack.

What followed was the strangest few moments in apartment wrestling history. The two women continued brawling for about a minute more. Then it happened. In a last attempt at victory, both women rushed at each other. A sickening crack echoed as the pair flopped to the carpet. In their mindless rush they had knocked into each other's head. Exhausted by the match, their bodies couldn't stand the last battering.

Two exquisite bodies struggled to arise. There was no use in trying. The beauties couldn't command the strength to move. Their furious battle had drained them of everything. All they could do was hope the other wouldn't take advantage and win the match.

Nobody moved for over a minute. Then Junger and Moll went to the women and tenderly lifted them. The two men carried the ladies to their separate bedrooms. There would be no more action tonight.

The next day, both women contacted Dave Moll. They wanted a rematch. Neither was satisfied. As far as they were concerned, victory was in each one's grasp when the accident occurred. Moll told them to rest up and he'd see what could be done.

It took only a week to set up the match. Once again, Junger's penthouse would be the sight. The most powerful men in the world, awed by the first match, swore to be present for the second. Both women proved themselves to be fantastic grapplers. Now one would be given the chance to be most spectacular of all. □

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WE ACCUSE

(Continued from Page 6)

champions. With three titles to shoot for, these young men have triple the chances to become a world champion. And who would want to take this kind of opportunity away from them?

There is no need to know who is the best wrestler. It will not change one person's love for the sport.

And it may not necessarily mean much. After all, even if one man claims to be the best, does that really mean he is? There are those who believe Mil Mascaras is the best wrestler in the WWF, even though he is not the champion. And in many ways, they are right.

In addition, no one can ignore



Graham has NWA champion Harley Race screaming in agony during the "Superbowl of Wrestling." What did this match prove? Both men were able to retain their own belts because of a battle clouded with controversy.

the tremendous amount of work it would take to unify the three federations into one. There are three separate and distinct sets of rules for the three associations. There are some very major differences in the manner by which matches are arranged. For example: One rarely sees a match between two scientific wrestlers in the WWWF, though this is a frequent occurrence in the NWA. Chain matches and cage matches are almost non-existent in the WWWF, whereas they are frequently held in the AWA and the NWA. There is a great deal more emphasis placed on tag team wrestling in the AWA than there is in the NWA, though the



Control of the battle kept switching from Race to Graham and back again

commitment is about the same for the WWWF. In short, there are many insurmountable differences between the three major associations.

We do recognize the desire of many wrestling fans to see the "Superbowl of Wrestling" carried to its logical conclusion. Many people want to see one man crowned as the greatest champion in the sport. However, we believe it might not be so good an idea as it first appears to be.

This is a problem that must be thought through more thoroughly. After a long, hard look at the situation, it is our sincere belief that having one champion of the entire sport may not be the best thing for wrestling. We would lose much more than we would gain. □

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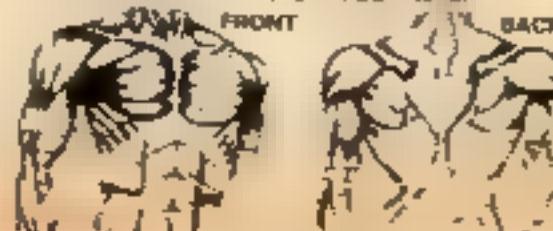
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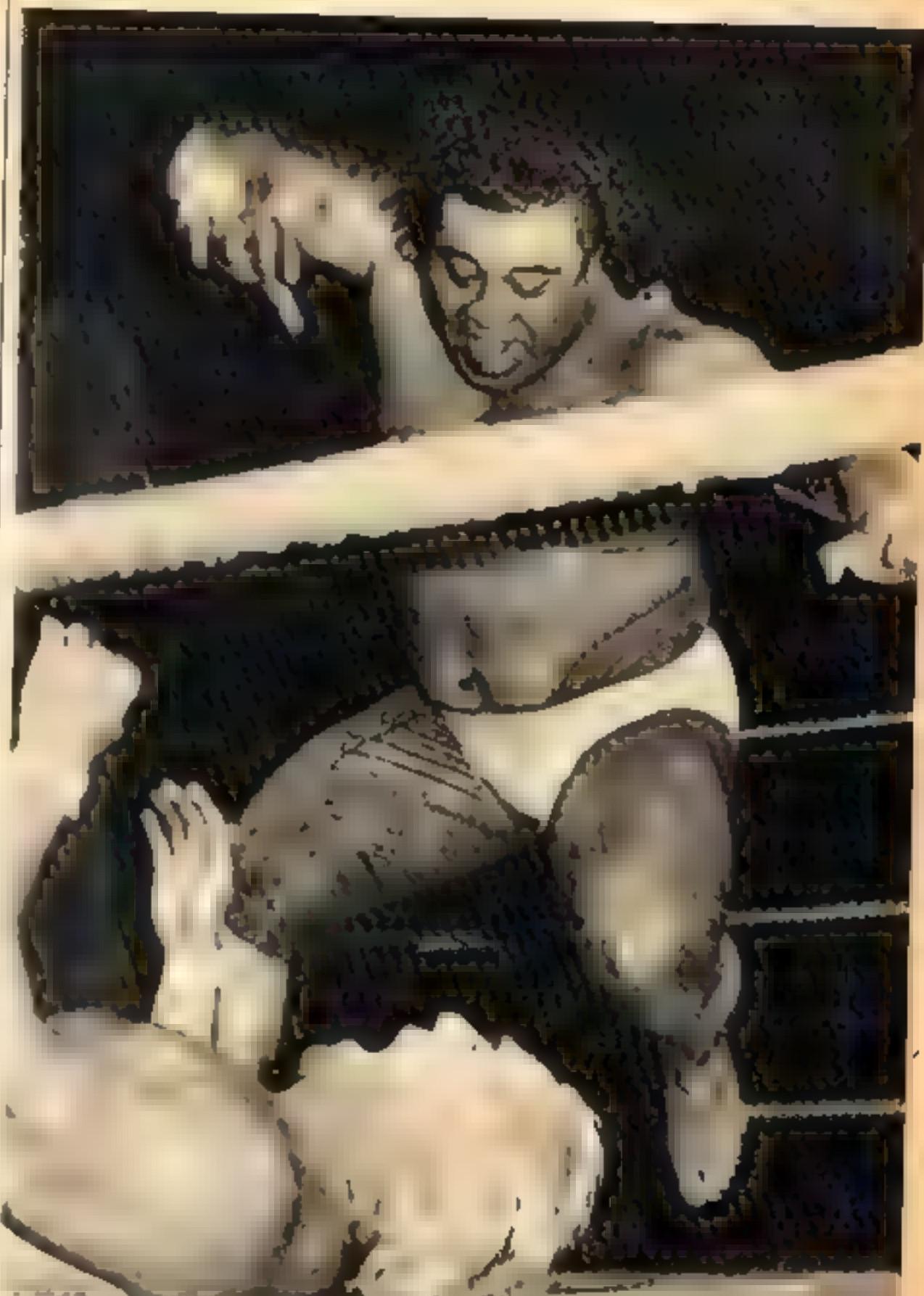
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WRESTLER OF THE MONTH

(Continued from Page 8)



Peter is prepared to launch a furious attack against Superstar Graham. Through his tremendous efforts against men like Superstar, Peter has gained the love and admiration of fans all over the wrestling scene!

"I won it? Oh, this is indeed a happy day. Yes, it's a very happy day for me," Maivia cried gleefully when he informed him of our decision.

Maivia admitted he went through an agonizingly bleak period during his recuperation from the first Graham bout.

"I just didn't know if I could go on

any longer," Maivia recollects. "Graham had given me a real beating. I really began to doubt myself, began wondering if I had what it takes to be a champion. Then I thought about going back to Samoa. I think that would have been admitting defeat. I'm not a quitter, not when it gets down to the real decision."



Maivia is very happy to have been the man chosen as "Wrestler of the Month." It is an honor he truly deserved.

"I owe a lot to the fans. A lot of them called me when they heard I might quit. They told me I had to go on, that I would get Graham, that I was better than he was. Then the more I thought about Graham, the more I thought about that first match. I got angry, as much at myself as at Graham. But I wanted to show everyone, including myself, that I have the makings of a champion. That second match, hah," Maivia chuckled. "Graham knew he had been in a brawl!"

Graham seemed astonished during that second match, at times losing his poise when confronted by the superior tactics of Maivia. Finally, Graham got himself disqualified. Peter won the match, but he did not win the belt. Still, he promises he will be back.

"I know now that I have what it takes to be champion," says Maivia. "My time will come soon."

Many times we see a wrestler become content with mediocrity. He seems to resign himself to acting as a bloody piece of meat for the more talented performers. It is encouraging to see a persistent and talented wrestler overcome adversity, and we're delighted to salute Peter Maivia's courage with the "Wrestler of the Month" award. □

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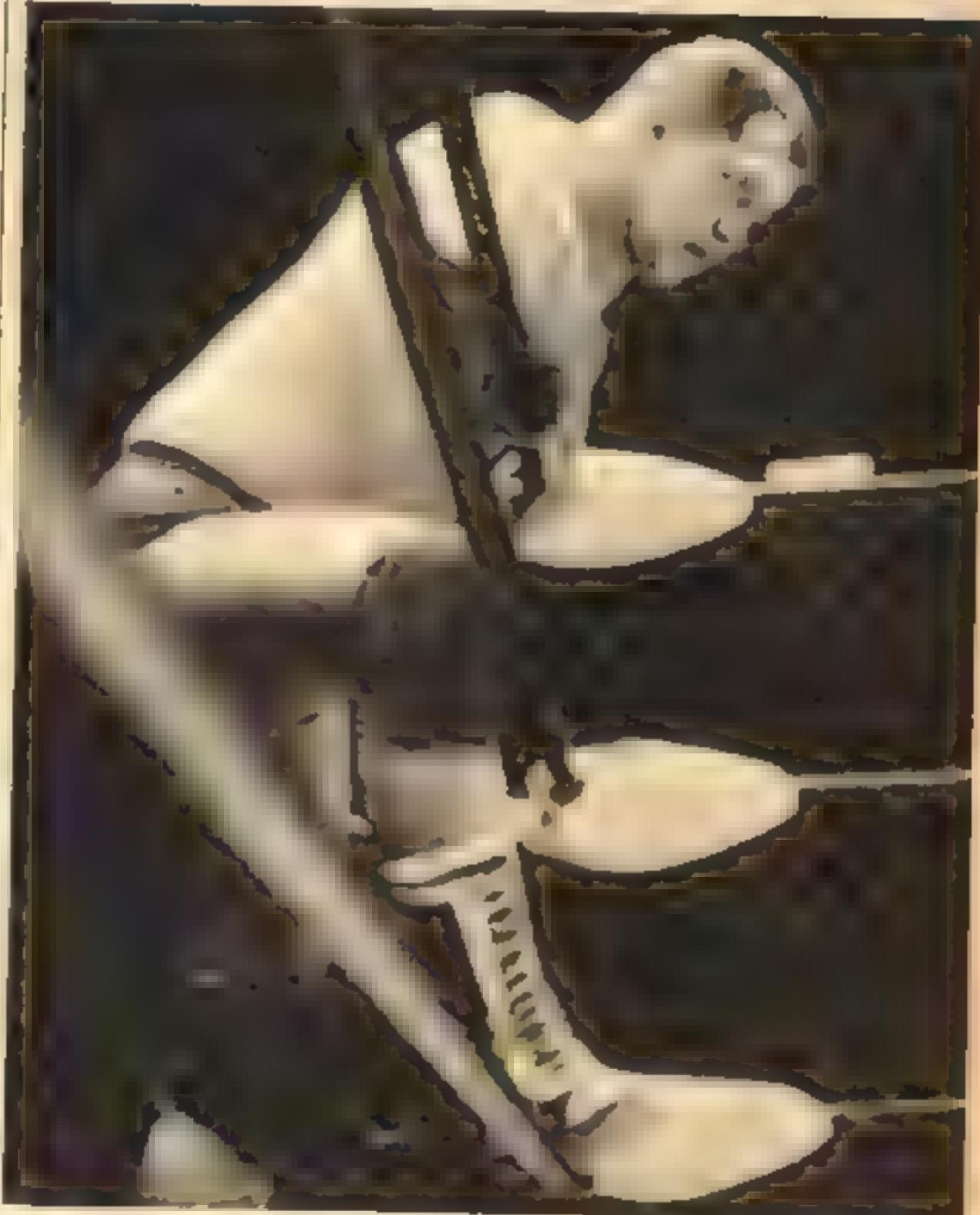
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THE TATTLER

(Continued from Page 12)



TERRY FUNK

A MARILLO, TEX.—Terry Funk is back in town. Oh, he does look a bit different (he had to shave off most of his hair for his role in the upcoming movie, "Paradise Alley"). But a change in appearance hasn't meant a change in style or tactics. He's the same Terry Funk.

There was a tremendous ovation for Terry when he entered the arena with his brother. All the fans gave Dory and Terry a warm reception,

one which was well-deserved.

After all, we know how to take care of our hometown boys. In Amarillo, the Funks are heroes.

—Virginia W. Sloan

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.—

They're back! They're the greatest! They're the Bruise and the Bruno! Bruiser and Bruno Sammartino, who once teamed together several years ago, have gotten back together, and they are sensational! They are the hottest new tag

team on the scene, and everyone here loves them

When it was first announced that Bruno was going to team up with Bruiser, no one could quite believe it. Even having these two greats on the same card was considered to be remarkable. Having them team up was fantastic!

Fans here have gone wild for the new team. To say the least, expect great things from this new pair—they could go far!

—Ed Remington



A vicious match between Jerry Race (above) and Bruno He surprised

day in "Never Say Race" ended wildly in favor of the champion. He had been a man who deserved a cruel, rough match. He deserves a rough match upon him. He

course, it would be a good idea to make his match a little too

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THE GAGNE DYNASTY GOES ON

(Continued from Page 30)

Gagne a prophet. Throughout the match, which went to the one-hour time limit, Bockwinkle was forced to resort to every imaginable dirty trick. Not by design, but because the destructively effective scientific moves Gagne used almost took away the cherished belt.

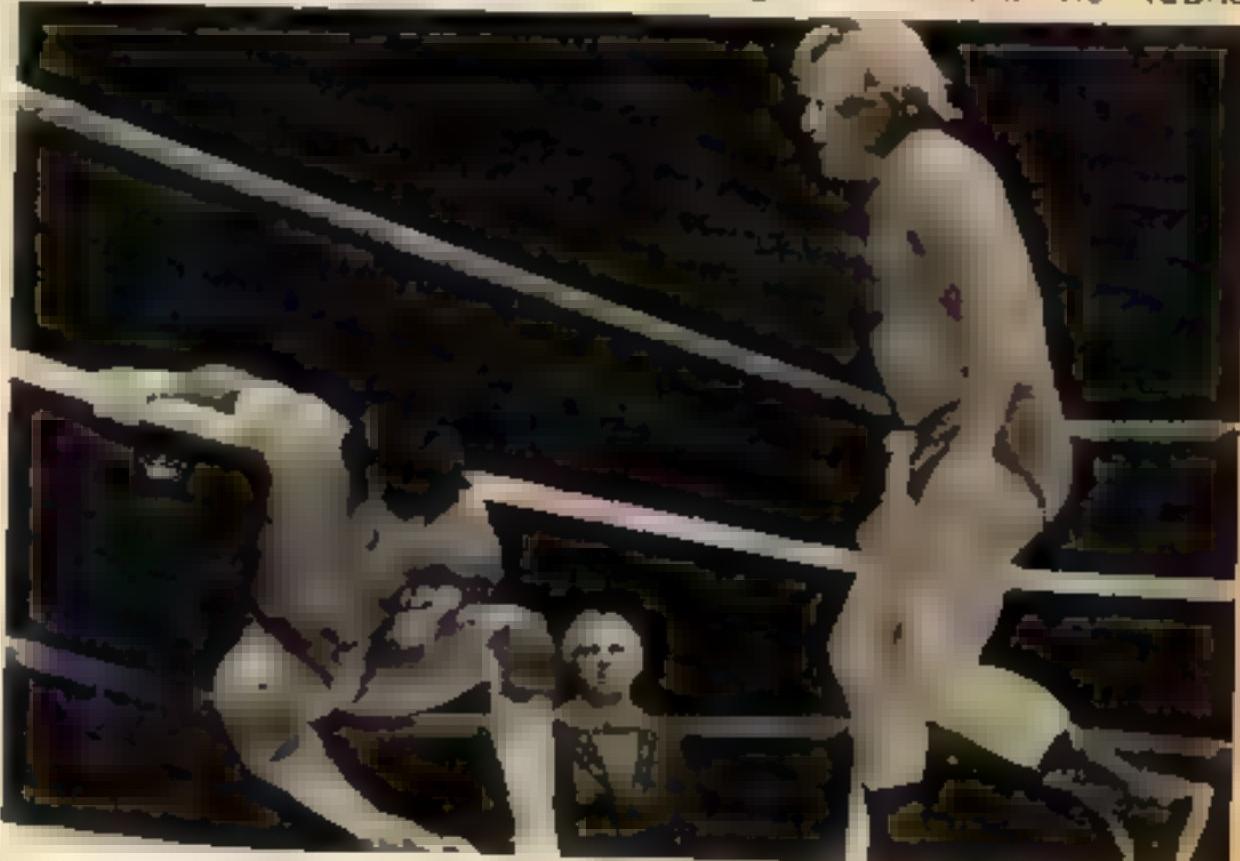
Every time Bockwinkle tried a vicious tactic, Gagne retaliated with an effortless twist of his body, turning sadistic purpose into a decisive hold, like a double-armed skull twister which crumpled Bockwinkle and

up. It would have been nice to have won the belt, so I am a little disappointed. This was one of my first shots at the title, and I think I demolished him. There's nothing wrong with that," Gagne chuckled.

There was one occasion in the second fall when Bockwinkle began bellowing at Gagne from a safe position in his corner.

"I'm tired of you Gagnes hassling me. Just when I beat one of you, another one comes along," Nick screamed.

Gagne admitted he found



Due to a vicious kick to his stomach, Greg is forced to clutch the ropes in pain. But Gagne will quickly recover.

brought him to his knees. Or a flying body press with legs extended and locked onto Gagne's groin, which Greg responded to with his own body propulsion, knocking Bockwinkle into the ropes.

"I can't say anything Bockwinkle did tonight surprised me. Not that he's so uncommonly mean, just that I knew he wouldn't be able to handle me. That might sound like conceit, but it really isn't. I was ready for him, really charged

Bockwinkle's remarks flattering.

"My father was a real champ, one of the guys who made wrestling what it is today. That Bockwinkle would put me together with my dad is a high kind of praise, even considering the source."

And what did Nick really think of the heir to the Gagne greatness once the sweat had been wiped away and the emotions of battle had cooled down?

"Not bad. A lot like his father I guess he takes that as a high compliment. That's not the way I meant it. Every kid wants to be like his father, even if his father

s a bum, which Verne Gagne is. So what if there's another Gagne? I'm still wearing the belt I took it from Verne and his kid sure ain't going to get it back. A dynasty? You kidding me? A dynasty means superiority Who is still AWA champion? Verne



Greg traps Bockwinkle in a sleeper hold as the weary Bockwinkle tries to work his way to the ropes in order to force a break.

Gagne? Greg Gagne? Soon they'll be sending in their sisters and aunts to wrestle me. Good. If they have any great-uncles send them in too. One Gagne is the same as the next—all mediocrities.

With dismissing words rendered obsolete by the huge welts covering his body, the bruises crimson on his cheeks, the heavy chest sagging wearily, Bockwinkle has certainly failed to convince anyone that Greg Gagne is not the link in the Gagne dynasty.

Or that someday father and son may claim wrestling invincibility and proclaim a new dynasty.

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is a bum, which Verne Gagne is. So what if there's another Gagne? I'm still wearing the belt I took it from Verne and his kid sure ain't going to get it back. A dynasty? You kidding me? A dynasty means superiority. Who is still AWA champion? Verne



Greg traps Bockwinkle in a sleeper hold as the weary Bockwinkle tries to work his way to the ropes in order to force a break.

Gagne? Greg Gagne? Soon they'll be sending in their sisters and aunts to wrestle me. Good. If they have any great-uncles send them in too. One Gagne is the same as the next—all mediocrities."

With dismissing words rendered obsolete by the huge welts covering his body, the bruises crimson on his cheeks, the heavy chest sagging wearily, Bockwinkle has certainly failed to convince anyone that Greg Gagne is not the link in the Gagne dynasty.

Or that someday father and son may claim wrestling invincibility and proclaim a new dynasty.

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RICKY STEAMBOAT

(Continued from Page 33)

"I'll tell you how it could happen," snarled Mulligan. "That baby boy with his cute eyes is a lot better than people think. All this stuff about gaining

experience is a lot of hogwash when you're talking about a kid with all that natural talent. I'd heard he wasn't all that good."

"There's this stupid unwritten



Above: In their most recent match, Rick has Blackjack Mulligan writhing in pain on the canvas. Below: In one of their first battles, Steamboat amazed the experts with his dazzling scientific methods. Little did anyone realize then that Rick would prove to be a truly remarkable wrestler.





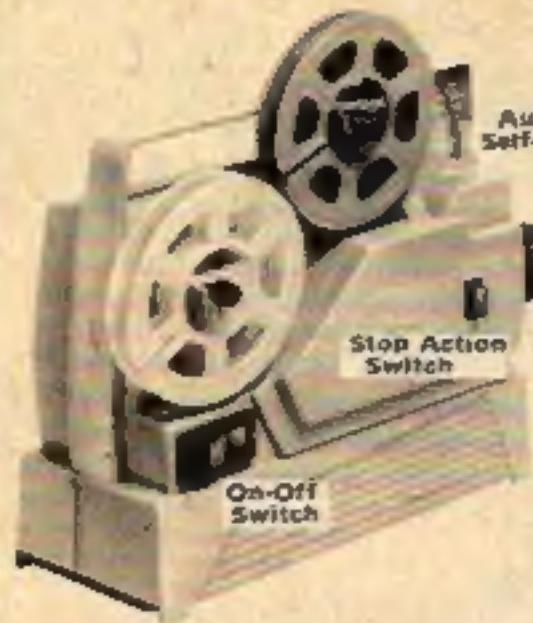
A well-executed armlock by Steamboat is clearly painful for Mulligan. Rick has proven to everyone now that he is a very talented wrestler with a great future!

rule," said Rick, "that you have to have a certain amount of matches to be considered a contender. Just like you have to have a determined number of years of college or so many years experience to get a good job. If you have the skills why must you wait while lesser-talented people stay ahead of you just because they've been around longer. It discourages ambition. Because our society encourages this narrow law, anyone who defies it by wanting to take his rightful place is put down. I didn't do anything different than I've been doing all along. But now they can't deny I'm good enough. It's only grudging respect, at best."

A rebel with a cause? Perhaps. Perhaps Steamboat's new acceptance is an indication that restrictive rules must be discarded when confronted with promise; that raw talent is to be honored more than archaic, hackneyed experience. Perhaps the new rules Rick has created are merely a door opening wider. Perhaps it will ease the strain on wrestlers to follow.

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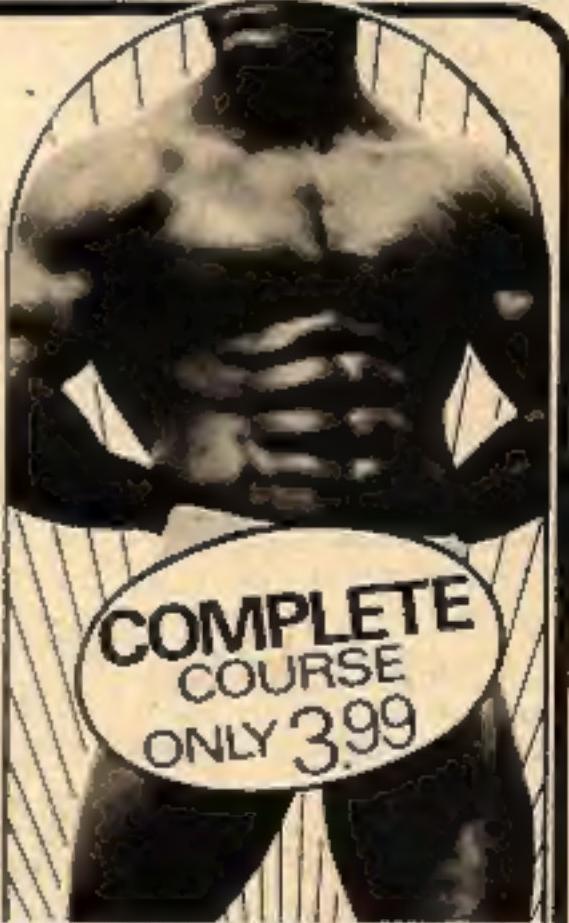
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Backlund vs. Patera

(Continued from Page 36)



Backlund prevents Patera from pinning him by bridging backwards on his head. Ken tried using all his strength—as well as a few vicious maneuvers—but he could not overcome the skill and power of Bob Backlund!

body went through. When I saw I could do it—and do it my way—I knew I was on my way, even though nobody else really did."

An old friend, Elliot Fielder, recalled Backlund's early days.

"After his first match he was sitting in his dressing room, all alone, his face all marked up with cuts," Fielder recollects. "I went in and congratulated him.

Suddenly, there were tears in his eyes. I asked him what was wrong. Hell, the guy had just won his first match. He looked up kind of sadly and said, 'It isn't easy doing things this way.'"

The formulation of Backlund's skillful moves became more evident as the Patera bout progressed. Again and again Patera's bulging arms caught

Backlund in a hold. Again and again it appeared Backlund was doomed. And again and again Backlund easily wrestled free.

Finally, near the end of the third fall, Backlund's face broke into a grin. He tensed himself and prepared to finish off Patera.

Backlund deflected one of Patera's lightning charges and grabbed Ken from behind. With both hands wrapped around Patera's waist, Bob picked him up and implemented his killing atomic spinebreaker. Backlund flung Patera's protesting figure onto his raised knee, catching Ken's spine directly onto the think bone of the knee.

Patera bounced off and flew out of the ring. Completely demoralized, he was unable to drag his crushed body back into the ring on time, clinching Backlund's victory.

Others finish off their opponents with a combination of skin-tearing and deceitful moves. Not so with Backlund. His spinebreaker is a carefully developed move which mixes the element of surprise with the conclusiveness of restrained fury.

Others chortle wildly and prance about their victim's prone figure. Not so with Backlund. Once Patera finally collapsed from the effort of re-entering the ring and was declared the loser, Backlund shrugged his shoulders, permitted himself a thin, triumphant grin, and swiftly returned to his dressing room.

Others approach the goal of winning the championship belt with nauseating boastfulness and cocky claims of eventual victory. Not Bob.

Bob Backlund reclined in his dressing room, letting his body unwind from the rigors it had suffered. He just smiled tightly.

The mountain may finally lie within his grasp. □

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